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THE NEWSPAPER FOR MAIDSTONE, MALLING, LARKFIELD AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES

We would like to wish all our readers and advertisers a
MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

SHOPPERS SETTING SIGHTS ON SALES

WHAT'S ON & WATCH

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Jack and the Beanstalk at The Hazlitt
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PERFECT PANTO FUN

Former Hollyoaks star Jake Hendriks has been amazed at the success of this year's Maidstone panto.

"The audiences have been brilliant and it's been a lot of fun," he said.

Jack and the Beanstalk at the Hazlitt Theatre in on until Sunday, January 4. Tickets are available from 01622 758611 or www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk. See the county panto roundup on page 20

BY ANNA WHITE

MAIDSTONE town centre shop staff are bracing themselves for a post-Christmas shopping bonanza.

As Woolworths becomes one of the first in the country to close its doors forever on Saturday (see full story page 5), store bosses are hoping the bargain hunters will be out in force.

One shop manager told Yourmaidstone: "For many shops it was a better run up to Christmas than they had expected with the credit crunch on. But now is the time they will begin fighting for survival and there are predictions more shops like Woolies will go under. "Cashflow is important to businesses and bargain hunters will be able to find huge reductions on everything from furniture to computer games."

At the beginning of this week shoppers in the town centre admitted they were buying mainly essentials for the Christmas holiday – and of course last-minute presents.

Dad of three Charlie Edmonds, from Hawkhurst, was in town. He told Yourmaidstone: "In truth I normally spend a couple of hundred pounds on each of my children but this year I've trimmed it down to about a hundred. But I do intend to take a look around the sales, I need a new three-piece suite and we'd originally planned to buy it in time for Christmas but my wife has lost her job so we're hanging on."

Young mum Amelia Johnson, who lives in the town, said she'd even economised on food.

She told Yourmaidstone: "I've made an effort to spend less this year and I've avoided putting too much on credit cards. But my father said there will be bargains in the January sales and I will be back looking at clothes."

"The sales are my favourite time of year."

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WHAT'S ON & WATCH

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TOP TV CLIPS



1 KOS Media staff on what Christmas means to them. See www.yourkenttv.co.uk and search the leisure channel.



2 Take a tour of Kent's own version of Lapland. See web TV site www.yourkenttv.co.uk and search 'Lapland'.



3 Pantomime perfect with Snow White. See web TV site www.yourkenttv.co.uk and search 'Marlowe'.

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NEWS EDITOR: Jon Coates 01303 817048

GROUP EDITOR: Gary Wright 01303 817032

WEBSITE: www.yourmaidstone.co.uk

TELEPHONE ADVERTISING: 01303 817110

FAX: (Advertising) 01303 817002

EMAIL: Editorial: yourmaidstone@kosmedia.co.uk

Sales: advertising@kosmedia.co.uk

HEAD OFFICE ADDRESS: Apple Barn, Hythe Road,

Smeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR

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MISSING OUT: Maidstone is in the wrong place for the new high speed trains say experts

Why we will be passed by new fast train

■ BY IAN READ

BUSINESS leaders think Maidstone will miss out by not being on the route of the fast rail service to London.

From late next year fast Javelin trains will connect Ashford to St Pancras, London, in less than half an hour while average journey times from the county town to Victoria come out at 23 minutes longer.

Maidstone's problem is that it has never had a really fast link to the capital and will lose out because there are no plans to upgrade the service from Maidstone East.

A spokesman for the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce based in the town said: "Although we do have good road links to London we believe an opportunity has been missed by not giving Maidstone a link to the Channel Tunnel link commuter services."

Transport professionals believe the town missed out because a spur to Maidstone would be impractical.

Tundi Olatunji, of Passenger Focus Kent, said there was never any intention to connect the town with

the the link. He said the cost would be prohibitive and neither the borough or the county councils would be unable to generate support for the project.

The only alternative would be a fast feeder train to Ashford but by the time Maidstone commuters changed trains the time taken would be roughly the same as if they'd gone straight to Victoria.

An accident of geography and 19th century rail infrastructure means Maidstone might never get the chance to join the link.

Mr Olatunji said: "There is no doubt the faster services will bring greater benefits to most of the county but Maidstone was never included because of the sheer difficulty of joining the line to the fast track."

Commuters might be able to link up with the service by heading for Medway but business bosses will probably stick to the train.

The first of a fleet of 29 high speed Hitachi trains are being tested on the lines.

Ashford is set to continue to boom because trains to St Pancras will take on average 32 minutes, even with stops at Ebbsfleet near Gravesend and Stratford.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Bail for pair accused of stealing handbag

A 33-year-old woman and a 65-year-old man have been arrested on suspicion of theft, after a handbag was taken from a woman while she was in Morrisons supermarket in St Saviour's Road on December 17.

The incident occurred at around 1.15pm when the victim left her bag unattended on her chair, while in the café area of the Morrisons store.

The pair have been bailed until January 18.

Distraction burglars targetting homes

CRIMINALS posing as officials struck at three addresses across Maidstone on the same day.

Police are warning residents to be vigilant after three homes in Maidstone were targeted on December 16 by what they called distraction burglars.

The offenders were posing as officials and were described as being white, with dark hair and having Irish accents.

Date set for hearing over drugs charge

A 44-year-old woman who lives in Maidstone has been charged with possession of cannabis and is due to appear before the town's magistrates in the new year.

Karen Davenport, of Old Tovil Road, has been bailed in advance of her hearing, which is scheduled to take place on January 6.

This action follows a police raid which took place at the address at which she lives on December 10.

NHS Trust receives petitions about care

A PAIR of petitions concerning Maidstone's health provision have been handed to NHS Trust bosses.

Liberal Democrat parliamentary candidate Peter Carroll presented the documents.

The first calls for services to be kept at Maidstone and the second specifically to retain a lead maternity unit.

Mr Carroll was accompanied by the leader of the Lib Dems on Maidstone council Fran Wilson.

The petitions, which have around 3,000 signatures have been collected in recent weeks after moves to downgrade services at Maidstone were revealed.

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Kelly's strictly rockin' around the Christmas tree with Brian

GLAMOUR girl Kelly Brook is set to star in the Christmas Day edition of hit show *Strictly Come Dancing*.

Last year the 29-year-old TV presenter turned actress was forced to withdraw from the show because of the death of her father. She had been hotly tipped to take first place.

But this year she will be battling to be festive champion alongside former winners Jill Halfpenny and Alesha Dixon, who will take on the top three from this year's show.

The trio and their partners will line up against Tom Chambers and Camilla Dallerup, Lisa Snowdon and Brendan Cole, and Rachel Stevens and Vincent Simone.

Showbiz insiders predict a close competition with 2007 winners Alesha Dixon and Matthew Cutler and 2004 winners Jill Halfpenny and Darren Bennett, and Rochester-born

■ BY NICK AMES

Kelly, who now lives in a farmhouse in Grafty Green, near Maidstone, and her partner Brian Fortuna completing the line-up.

Kelly and Brian will dance a jive to *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*.

Other songs featured include Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Sleigh Ride, 2 Become 1, White Christmas and Favourite Things.

The show's Christmas special has become a feature of the festive TV schedules in recent years and is usually pre-recorded a week before it goes out – but only after the finalists are known so the *Strictly Christmas Champions* can be crowned.

But Kelly's return was controversial, resulting in a public row over who should accompany her.

According to a national newspaper, professional dancers James Jordan

and Brian Fortuna rowed over who should be on Kelly's arm in the run-up to the festive special.

The story claimed things got heated backstage when James, 30, and Brian, 26, both put themselves forward to be her partner.

A show source told *The Sun*: "It started off civilised with them arguing what dances they'd do, but got heated."

"Even though both men were deadly serious, it was hilarious, like that scene from *Bridget Jones's Diary* where Hugh Grant fights Colin Firth."

Kelly was originally paired with Brendan Cole, but as he and partner Lisa are still in the competition, Kelly needed a new man.

The source said: "Brendan isn't overjoyed by Kelly's return. They weren't close. But she could give Lisa tips on handling his moods."

Russell Watson will also be performing on the show on BBC1 at 7pm, which is set to top the TV ratings.



SHE'S BACK: Kelly Brook will appear in the Christmas show of *Strictly Come Dancing*

NHS Trust finally gets new leader

A NEW chairman has been appointed to take charge of Maidstone Hospital – after health bosses doubled the salary on offer.

Anthony Jones, 64, will pick up £44,000 to head the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.

The role is a part time one and the going rate for chairman of similar sized trusts in the county is £22,000.

But Mr Jones is taking a job which has been described as a 'poisoned chalice' following the hygiene scandal which cost the lives of 90 patients between April 2004 and September 2006.

Health Secretary Alan Johnson will be monitoring the trust's performance following the outbreak of *Clostridium difficile* which infected more than 1,000 patients.

Mr Jones, who lives at Hartlip near Sittingbourne, has been a non-executive member of the trust's board since March last year.

His brief is to transform public perception of the trust so a line can be drawn under the scandal.

George Jenkins, chairman of East Kent Hospitals Trust, has been filling the role since the resignation of the previous board in the wake of the scandal.

Mackenzie transforms from geek to demon

ACTOR Mackenzie Crook is set to star as vampire *Gladiolus Thrip* in ITV1's new six-part drama series *Demons* – a contemporary take on Bram Stoker's *Dracula* set in modern-day London.

The show starts on January 3 and will run for a couple of months.

Crook, 37, who was born in Maidstone, admitted the part of twisted vampire *Thrip* is not the sort of role he is often offered.

He said: "I have played some interesting and quirky characters before but nothing evil and I've wanted to play someone really bad for a long time."

"In my early career I got parts as drug dealers or addicts; always something to do with the narcotics industry."

"Then after *The Office* it was always nerdy characters. You have to sift through the parts to find the roles that are going to stretch you. *Thrip* was a great opportunity to play a different type of character."

"He really looks after his appearance, wearing extravagant Teddy boy clothes and arranging his hair in a strange quiff – even though as a vampire he has no reflection so how he manages I don't know."

"And he has this weird scrimshaw nose stuck on, although you never



TALENT: Mackenzie Crook has played a variety of roles on the big and little screens discover what happened to his real nose – you just see the scarring.

"In a strange way *Thrip* is full of life even though he only has half of one. There are elements of comedy in the way I play him but he does have to be scary."

"It doesn't take much for him to completely lose it and you see the vicious side of him come out. He can kill people with his fingernail; it's spiteful, horrible stuff and there is nothing honourable about him."



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Ram-raiders hunted by police following attacks

DETECTIVES are hunting members of an ATM gang which left a trail of destruction across the county.

In the early hours of Friday, December 12, they attacked convenience stores in Lyminge, Wye and Lenham.

Neighbours in Honeywood Road, Lenham, heard a crash as a Mitsubishi 4x4 ploughed into a shop front.

Attempts were made to drag the cash machine away but raiders abandoned the vehicle in the middle of the road and fled.

In all three attempts the robbers used sledge hammers to try and prize the machines away from the buildings.

Damage across the three stores is estimated at several hundred thousand pounds.

Detective Chief Inspector Isobel Gibson said: "We believe one of the offenders may have walked along the A20."

The would-be thieves used two Mitsubishi 4x4 in the raids – both vehicles were seriously damaged and were abandoned by the gang.

Nelson Hilden, 49, of Ash, near Sevenoaks, appeared at Maidstone Magistrates Court last Wednesday accused of taking part in the ram-raids.

He was charged with several counts of aggravated vehicle taking and burglary, and will next appear at Maidstone Crown Court on February 11.

Developers secure your safety with their designs

A NEW housing development has been granted "secured by design" status by the police, as its architecture has been designed to promote security for those who live there.

From the first architectural drawings to its completion, officers worked with Wealden Homes to ensure Wood Court on Fountain Lane in Barming was designed to be as safe as possible for residents.

John Grant, crime reduction manager for Maidstone police, said: "We were delighted to work with Wealden Homes on this development, which has attained secured by design status thanks to special consideration being given to street lighting, home security and perimeter security."

"This responsible attitude sets a good precedent for other housebuilders and will hopefully make the police's job easier, by preventing crime."

Barry Chamberlain, managing director of Wealden Homes, added: "As an integral part of our design process, we actively work with Kent Police in order to enhance the quality of our schemes."

Archbishop's Christmas message defends the world's children
Exploitation of our youngsters cannot prevail

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has delivered a fierce defence of the world's children in his traditional Christmas message.

Dr Rowan Williams, who will address a packed congregation on Christmas Day morning at Canterbury Cathedral, also made what appears to be a thinly-veiled attack on abortion as he demanded that unborn children not be regarded as "less than members of the human family".

Writing in the wake of the Baby P scandal, he criticises a world where children have become "despised, exploited, even feared". Dr Williams also raised fears that the economic downturn would lead to greater suffering and deprivation for children, and we should all stand up to protect them.

He said: "As we look around the world, there is plenty to prompt us to far more anger and protest about what happens to children than we often seem to feel or express. This year there have been several public debates about childhood, as research has underlined the lack of emotional security felt by many children, the high cost of divorce and family breakdown, the disproportionate effect of poverty and debt on children, and many other problems."

The Archbishop also pointed to the horrors

■ BY IAN PATEL

visited upon children around the world, such as child soldiers in Africa and Sri Lanka, youngsters caught up in conflicts, and those faced with heavy burdens caused by Aids.

He also railed against the "insensitive treatment" given to child refugees and asylum seekers.

Dr Williams added: "Christmas is a good time to think again about our attitudes to children and about what happens to children in our societies."

"Christians who recognise the infinite and all-powerful God in the vulnerability of a newborn baby have every reason to ask hard questions about the ways in which children come to be despised, exploited, even feared in our world."

"We all suspect that in a time of economic crisis worldwide, it will be the most vulnerable who are left to carry most of the human cost."

"The Holy Child of Bethlehem demands of us that we resist this with all our strength, for the sake of the one who, though he was rich, for our sake became poor, became helpless with the helpless so that he might exalt us all through his mercy and abundant grace."

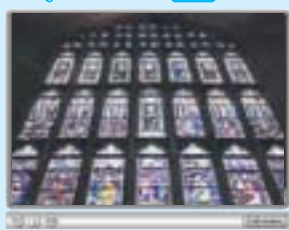


MESSAGE: Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams says children are despised, exploited and feared in the modern world

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A remarkable year of highs and lows

IT'S been another busy year for Canterbury Cathedral as it prepares to welcome packed congregations to its Christmas services.

Tickets for its annual Christmas Eve service were snapped up weeks in advance as worshippers looked to secure a seat for one of the most joyous occasions in the calendar.

Such was the demand that an additional service, 24 hours earlier, was added on a first-come, first-served basis for those missing out on the December 24 carol concert.

Earlier this year, the once-a-decade Lambeth Conference was staged in Canterbury, with some 800 Anglican bishops from across the world making the pilgrimage to the city for

three weeks of discussion and debate on the Church and its policies.

It was not without controversy, however, with some bishops boycotting the event and snubbing the personal invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Key to their concerns was the Church's stance on same-sex marriages and homosexual clergy. You can watch clips about the Lambeth Conference and take a tour of Canterbury Cathedral itself – including remarkable views across the city from the Bell Harry Tower – by visiting our free broadband TV channel www.yourkenttv.co.uk. Simply search separately for 'lambeth' and 'cathedral'.

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LAST DAYS: Woolworths continues to be packed with shoppers after a bargain in the run up to closure

Final trading day set for our Woollies

THE Woolworths store in the centre of Maidstone will close for ever on Saturday.

It will be among the first of the chain to be shut down by administrators Deloitte, who have failed to find a buyer for the stores.

They are being closed in batches of 200, with Maidstone one of the first to go. Branches in Canterbury, Margate, Ramsgate and Tenterden are also set to close this weekend.

Other stores will close on December 30, January 2 and the last ones on January 5, but the locations have not yet been finalised.

Across the county there are 35 Woolworths stores employing a total of 1,167 people, who all now face the prospect of losing their jobs.

The Maidstone store has been a fixture of the town since it opened around 70 years ago and it employs around 40 people.

It has recently seen a massive sale with price cuts of up to 50 per cent. More stock will be offered at bargain prices in coming days.

A statement issued by the administrators when the first batch of closures was announced read: "The Closing Down Sale will see new discounts introduced on over 40 million items with discounts of 20-60 per

■ BY NICK AMES

cent across items in all stores.

"Fifty million new stock items including DVDs, CDs and toys will be received into stores this week and further discounts will be applied in due course."

The administrators added that over 300 of the stores nationwide are under offer from a range of third parties, and that there is considerable interest in the other 500 stores.

The administrators have also received offers for the Woolworths brand name, and the associated Ladybird and Chad Valley brands.

Neville Kahn, joint administrator, said: "While negotiations for the sale of Woolworths' retail arm remain ongoing, and we continue to speak to new interested parties, regrettably we have had to begin a store closure programme."

"We are extremely grateful to the staff and management for their support throughout this difficult time."

"We are confident we will sell the leases of the 300 stores currently under offer and are hopeful our ongoing discussions with other parties will also prove successful."

Take a drink and walk down memory lane

FREMLINS Brewery was a huge part of the community in Maidstone as one of the main employers and brought a lot of trade through import and export to the town.

Despite being anti-drink, Ralph Fremlin took over the Earl Street site in 1861, which remained home to the world famous Whitbread Fremlins until the mid 1980s when it was demolished to make way for a shopping centre.

As part our film history series we are looking for your memories of the brewery. To share them please call 01303 817109 or email julie.maddocks@kosmedia.co.uk

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Neighbours sign up for lower speed limit

MAIDSTONE Green Party has presented a 347-signature petition from residents to council chiefs calling for urgent action to reduce the volume and speed of traffic on four roads in Fant.

They say Bower Place, Upper Fant Road, Gatland Lane and Glebe Lane are used as rat-runs by drivers trying to avoid the Tonbridge Road, yet have no traffic calming measures.

The petition, collected by the Greens knocking on every door on the four roads, also overwhelmingly backed a 20mph speed limit and comes a few weeks after a major accident in Bower Place. It was sent to Kent County Council and the highways authority, last week but the group wants Maidstone council to add its voice to their campaign.

Ian McDonald, transport spokesman for Maidstone Green Party, said: "The people of Fant have spoken."

"We are all fed up with the high volumes of traffic and the speed with which some drive at along these roads."

Hunt begins for this year's top teenage sports person

THE race is on to get in nominations for this year's Youth Sport Achievement Awards for Maidstone.

Maidstone council is holding the awards ceremony in recognition of the young people in the town who have made an impression in sport. Nominations are open until Wednesday, December 31.

To nominate call the council's sports, play and youth development team on 01622 602222 or see www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/sports. The presentation ceremony will be at Mote Hall in Maidstone Leisure Centre on Friday, January 30.

Police outside Cathedral arrest abusive drinker

A MAN swore at tourists outside Canterbury Cathedral after he was thrown out of a pub, a court heard.

Darren Hart, 22, of Square Hill Road, Maidstone, was ejected from Wetherspoons in BURGATE, Canterbury, on December 12, and warned about his language.

When he refused to move on police arrested him, Canterbury magistrates were told.

Hart was already facing charges for theft and criminal damage as a result of other incidents in the city.

He admitted all three charges. The case was adjourned until January 14 for probation reports before he is sentenced.

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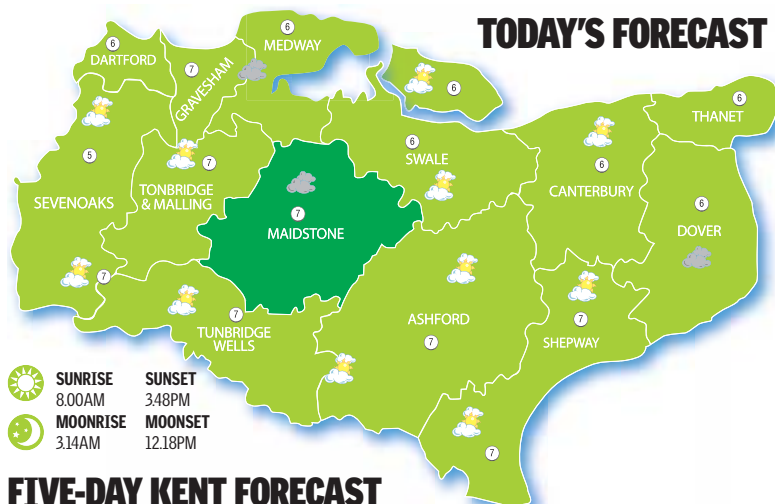
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Dover	Saturday	7:49am	5.7m
	Sunday	8:47am	5.8m
Dungeness	Saturday	7:41am	6.5m
	Sunday	8:35am	6.6m
Ramsgate	Saturday	8:19am	4.3m
	Sunday	9:17am	4.4m
Sheerness	Saturday	9:12am	4.9m
	Sunday	10:14am	5.0m
Whitstable	Saturday	9:17am	4.7m
	Sunday	10:21am	4.8m

AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

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Athens	14°C	New York	0°C
Barcelona	13°C	Paris	9°C
Beijing	1°C	Rome	14°C
Bombay	30°C	Sydney	19°C
Cape Town	25°C	Tenerife	21°C
Cardiff	11°C	Tokyo	11°C
Gibraltar	14°C	Vancouver	-6°C
Hong Kong	27°C	Warsaw	4°C
Las Palmas	19°C	Wellington	17°C



BLOOMING SUCCESS: Helen Grant, left, assures Evelyn Fishenden, right, that the memorial garden will live on

I can promise you your rose garden

A PENSIONER received an early Christmas present when the future of a garden she founded in the county town to remember lost loved ones was guaranteed.

Following action by Conservative parliamentary candidate Helen Grant and Maidstone council, a six year campaign to restore the Memorial Rose Garden, located on the Millennium Walk near Locksmeadow, has finally been a success.

Evelyn Fishenden, 81, from Cranbrook, founded the open space by paying £20 to plant two rose bushes in 2000 in memory of her son Nigel, 43, who died in 1999 and her grandson Tom, 18, who was killed in a car accident in 1996.

But the plants did not flower properly, which upset Mrs Fishenden every time she visited the garden to remember her loved ones.

Mrs Grant spoke on Mrs Fishenden's behalf with David Petford, chief executive of Maidstone council, and received an assurance that an alternative site along the River Park will be found by January or February, and plaques for loved ones installed.

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QUESTION & ANSWER

FATHER CHRISTMAS



Q Christmas Eve is almost upon us. Are you ready for your jaunt around the world?

A It's been a tough few months, actually. The credit crunch has hit us all quite hard up here. The cost of magic dust for the sleigh has gone through the roof. You think petrol prices get high – you have no idea! But we'll be ready come Christmas Eve. We always are.

Q How many helpers do you have, and are they really always checking up on everyone's behaviour?

A I am very fortunate to have an extended network of helpers. My happy band of elves work with me, preparing the toys and tending the reindeer, and they are crucial. They work very hard and without them I'd be stuck.

If they're not helping me here, they're keeping an eye out, checking who's been naughty or nice.

We have an extensive – now computerised, of course – list of who gets the good stuff. I also have helpers who go out and impersonate me in shops. As much as I would like to, I simply cannot be everywhere at the same time. Well, apart from on Christmas Eve, of course, but that's magic for you.

Q Do you have a favourite Christmas song?

A I'm rather partial to I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus. It's a bit cheeky, isn't it? In truth, I didn't kiss that person's mum – or should I say mom – because, as everyone knows, one of the tricks of the trade is that no one ever sees me. I've always assumed the

person they were kissing just used that as an excuse to get up to something they shouldn't. Mind you, some of the things you get to see while darting from home to home...

Well, let's just say it's not suitable for a family newspaper.

Q Which name do you prefer: Santa Claus, St Nick, Father Christmas? The list goes on...

A In America they do love calling me Santa, and in the UK I know there is a big popularity for Father Christmas. I don't mind, to be honest. What I do object to quite strongly is being called fat. I'm big-boned. I'm jolly. I'm red-faced. I am NOT fat.

Q What do you say to those who question your existence?

A It's very simple. If you doubt me, then don't hang up your stocking on Christmas Eve. I don't mind. It's just one less chimney for me to squeeze down and less weight we have to carry on the sleigh. Have I mentioned the cost of magic dust this year?

Q How are the reindeer? Are they ready for their big night?

A It's a bit like preparing an athlete for the Olympic Games. There's months of training, all building up to the big day when they have to perform. I have quite a herd to choose from and there is, as always, healthy competition for places.

Pulling my sleigh is considered the pinnacle of a reindeer's career, after all. Just take a look

at Rudolph. He was a regular and he makes a small fortune in commercial deals.

Every time you see a cup with his face on it, or a Christmas card, he gets paid. Normally in carrots or grain, but paid none the less. Become a sleigh regular and the rewards really are high.

Q How long do you spend in Kent on your rounds? And what do you think of the county?

A It's a trade secret as to how long I stay there on Christmas Eve, but what I can say is that I have frequently spent a long weekend in the county.

I can never stay anywhere too long as people spot the beard and start whispering. I'd love to stay for a proper holiday, though. It's a beautiful place, full of beautiful people. Most of whom, I might add, appear to have been good this year.

Q You've been doing this for a good few years now. Has retirement crossed your mind?

A It's a bit like Sir Alex Ferguson. There was once a time after a particularly annoying Christmas Eve I thought I'd throw it all in.

Lots of children seemed to almost wake up just as I entered the room, and the number of drunks on the streets was crazy.

But then, just as I think I've had enough, the next year will be great and I forget all the bad things. And, to be honest, where else could you get a job which offers such long holidays? It makes teachers look overworked!

Ho, ho, ho!

Taking five minutes out of his hectic and demanding schedule to speak to **Chris Britcher**, Father Christmas reveals quite what makes him tick as he gets ready for the busiest day of his year.

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Film highlights the dangers facing us all due to global warming. Search 'NASA'



Tom Howard reviews the week's local football news from around the county. Search 'football'



Julie Maddocks charts the history of one of Kent's best-known breweries. Search 'Fremlins'



Santa Claus lets the train take the strain ahead of his busiest day of the year. Search 'Tenterden'



The best job in the world? Kent's very own Willy Wonka shares his secrets. Search 'Chocolution'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

You can view all these videos and others from around the county with the click of a mouse at...

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Don't wait until spring to put up that birdbox

BY NICK AMES

THE Royal Society for the Protection of Birds has launched a winter appeal to gardeners.

Garden birds use nestboxes as shelter during the winter as well as for raising fledglings in spring, and the RSPB is appealing to people across the county to put boxes up in the right place now, ready for winter roosting.

Nestboxes don't always go unused in winter, as many believe, and gardens may have some unexpected winter guests.

During the autumn and winter many birds will enter nestboxes looking for a suitable place to roost or feed. They then often use the same boxes for nesting in the spring.

But positioning them wrongly could lead to young birds baking to death if exposed to too much sunlight when the days warm up in spring.

Hester Phillips, of RSPB South East, said: "It might seem very early to be thinking about siting your nestbox, but as well as using them to shelter from the cold, birds will actually start shopping around for suitable nest sites soon, too. Birds often use nestboxes as a place

to roost or store food in winter. An amazing 61 wrens have been found roosting in one nestbox to shelter from the cold. The warmth generated in a communal roost can really save them in harsh winters.

"It's also essential that you choose the right place for your box. Please don't put them up on any old bit of wall or fence.

"The direction is very important. Unless there are trees or buildings which shade the box during the day, they need to be facing between north and east to protect them from overheating in strong summer sunshine.

"This will also shelter them from our prevailing damp south-westerly winds."

Other tips include:

- Make sure birds have a clear flight-path to the nest without clutter directly in front of the entrance.
- Most nestboxes should not be located too close to the ground or on a fence or shed, where cats can lurk.
- Boxes for robins and wrens, however, should not be too high and are best placed among greenery to give additional protection from predators and the elements.
- If you have more than one nestbox, site them as far apart as possible as many birds like their own space and are highly territorial during the breeding season.



BOX CLEVER: Winter roosting sites are important to birds

More than they bargained for as danger toys seized in raids

A CHRISTMAS crackdown by Kent Trading Standards officers led to the seizure of more than 2,000 potentially dangerous toys.

They formed part of a larger haul of almost 4,500 counterfeit items that also included clothing and footwear.

Officers seized the goods during raids at five premises in Snodland last week, with stock also taken from people using online auction sites from properties in Thanet and Romney Marsh.

Cllr Mike Hill, cabinet member for community services at Kent County Council, said: "These latest raids have helped save consumers money and protected children from receiving fake and possibly dangerous toys this Christmas.

"We are all attracted by bargains and these traders have been cashing in on that.

"At a time when businesses are feeling the pinch, too, it is important that action is taken against unscrupulous individuals and organisations."

The seized toys are currently being tested for safety, with the alleged offenders being dealt with on suspicion of the sale of counterfeit goods.



Getting to the root of buying a good Christmas tree this year

PAT CRAWFORD provides wildlife gardening advice from Hadlow College in her exclusive column for Yourmaidstone. ONLY tough and dedicated gardeners are likely to be working outside coming up to Christmas.

But an important job that gardeners might oversee is choosing the Christmas tree and looking after it.

The trees for sale in most garden centres and nurseries have had their roots cut off.

It is possible to find rooted trees but Matthew Archer, manager of Hadlow's Broadview Centre,

says they are unlikely to survive to be planted outdoors if they are kept in an overheated room throughout the festive period.

He suggests putting the tree in an unheated conservatory or similar location.

He said: "Situated in this sort of atmosphere, the tree should survive – and carefully looked after, it will give pleasure for years and years."

Matthew believes that the biggest problem with unrooted trees is that they are allowed to dry out, "just like cut flowers, they cannot survive without

water – in fact, an average-sized tree will drink about half a gallon of water daily."

His best advice is: "Decide where the tree is going to be located before buying because this determines the size. Select a tree that is a good colour and shape.

"Run a hand down the branches and if the tree discards a lot of needles, it's already on the way to drying out and it's not worth buying it."

• Did you know that membership of Hadlow College's Gardening Club is free of charge? For an application form send an SAE to Pat Crawford at Hadlow College, Hadlow, Kent, TN11 0AL.

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Sat 10	London Boat Show 55th Anniversary New	£27
Sat 10	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 11	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Wed 14	London Museums	£15
Sat 17	Cirque Du Soleil "Quidam"	£85
Sat 17	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 18	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 18	Bruges or Sluis – by Tunnel	£30
Wed 21	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Thu 22	The Musical Museum With Lunch New	£29
Sat 24	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 25	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Sun 25	London Eye, Lunch & River Cruise	£59
Mon 26	Monday Special – Ypres & St Flora – by Tunnel	£20
Tue 27	Pussycat Dolls At The O2 Arena	£59
Wed 28	Mystery Day With Lunch	£20
Thu 29	London & Royal Opera House Tour New	£30
Sat 31	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39

FEBRUARY

Date	Destination	Price (Adult pp)*
Sun 1	Holiday On Ice Brighton "Mystery"	£39
Thu 5	Greenwich Maritime Museum New	£15
Sat 7	London Showtime	fr £54
Mon 9	Monday Special – Ostend & St Flora – by Tunnel	£20
Wed 11	Lunch At Moulin Snick, St Omer – by Tunnel	£40
Thu 12	Raf Museum London New	£15
Sat 14	Valentines Love Is In The Air – London Eye & Chocolates	£39
Sun 15	London Eye, Lunch & River Cruise	£59
Tue 17	London Zoo	£29
Wed 18	Kew Gardens Tropical Plants 250th Anniversary	£30
Thu 19	Boulogne & Hypermarket – by Tunnel	£25
Sat 21	Disneyland® Resort Paris – by Tunnel	£65
Sun 22	Bruges or Sluis – by Tunnel	£30
Tue 24	Imperial War Museum & Ian Fleming Exhibition (James Bond)	£25
Wed 25	Sound Of Music	£49
Thu 26	Mystery Day	£15
Sat 28	Lakeside or Romford Market	£17

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* Call for child & senior prices

MARCH

Date	Destination	Price (Adult pp)*
Mon 2	Monday Special – Ghent – by Tunnel	£20
Wed 4	National Gallery & Picasso Exhibition New	£29
Fri 6	Dirty Dancing	£59
Sat 7	The Secret World Of Bletchley Park New	£29
Sun 8	Crufts Dog Show	£40
Tue 10	Paris In Springtime – by Tunnel	£40
Wed 11	Lunch At Moulin Snick, St Omer – by Tunnel	£40
Thu 12	Milestones Living History Museum New	£25
Sun 15	Bruges or Sluis – by Tunnel	£30
Tue 17	Windsor Lunch Cruise New	£35
Thu 19	Wisley Gardens At Springtime	£25
Sat 21	London Showtime	fr £54
Sat 21	Hampton Court Floramania New	£30
Sun 22	London Eye, Lunch & River Cruise Mothers Day	£59
Sun 22	Classical Spectacular with lunch	£83
Tue 24	Arras – by Tunnel	£25
Wed 25	Kew Gardens At Springtime 250th Anniversary	£30
Thu 26	Ideal Home Show	£30
Sat 28	Disney Live – Mickey's Magic Show New	£39
Sat 28	Ideal Home Show	£30
Sun 29	Ideal Home Show	£30
Sun 29	Bruges or Sluis – by Tunnel	£30
Tue 31	Thames Lunch Cruise & London New	£40

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Here's a few sobering thoughts

■ BY NICK AMES

POLICE across the county have secured significant convictions to provide a sobering reminder about road safety and the consequences of breaking the law.

The convictions come as Kent Police reaches the half way stage of its Christmas anti-drink and drug driving campaign which is using cutting edge technology and new tactics to detect rogue drivers.

To date, since the campaign started on December 1:

- A total of 143 people have been arrested for drink or drug driving
- Three people have been jailed for death by dangerous driving
- There have been nine fatal, or potentially fatal, collisions
- Of the above, four people have died.

In one of the cases, a motorist on a lifetime driving ban in Ireland, who killed a 52-year-old Sheerness man in a motorway collision, has been jailed for nine years. Stephen O'Reilly reached speeds of more than 110mph shortly before the collision, on the M2 near Sittingbourne, in June, this year.

He was also drinking beer at the wheel. Head of the serious collision investigation unit, Inspector Paul Sellwood, said: "This has been a lengthy investigation for the unit, involving close working with the police and



NINE YEARS:
Stephen O'Reilly



£1,000 FINE:
David Hoskins

courts in the Republic of Ireland. We are very satisfied for the family with the outcome. O'Reilly is a career criminal who has not only given a family a life sentence but he will also have to live with the consequences of his driving for the rest of his life."

In another case, Maidstone businessman David Hoskins pleaded guilty to allowing his employee, Martin Crealock, to drive a work vehicle when it wasn't insured for him to drive.

Hoskins received a £1,000 fine and was made to pay £365 costs. He was also given six

penalty points on his licence.

This is the first time Kent Police can recall anyone receiving the maximum fine and penalty points for permitting another person to drive uninsured.

Martin Crealock was sentenced earlier this year at Maidstone Crown Court, where he received 15 months in jail and was disqualified from driving for four years.

Finally, two police officers were seriously injured when their marked car was hit from behind by 27-year-old Lee Staples, in April.

It was parked on the hard shoulder at junction



TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES: Dangerous driving and flouting the law can devastate lives - and will not be tolerated, say Kent Police

two of the M2 coast-bound carriageway with all the necessary emergency lighting.

The collision was so serious the officers had to be cut from the wreckage by the Kent Fire and Rescue Service.

Staples couldn't give a reasonable reason for colliding with the police vehicle and alcohol and drug abuse were ruled out.

He was subsequently reported for careless driving and pleaded guilty. He was fined £400 and had to pay £60 court costs and a £15 victim surcharge. He was also disqualified from driving for 12 months.

Helping businesses weather the storm

BUSINESSES struggling amid the economic downturn have been told to push ahead in the new year with confidence.

Kent County Council chiefs have underlined their commitment to supporting local industry and cabinet member for regeneration Kevin Lynes says it intends to transform the county into what he's dubbed 'the Garden of Enterprise'.

Cllr Lynes outlined the policies he hopes will help the county weather

the downturn. He said: "Successful businesses create wealth, jobs and opportunities in the county. KCC has a key role in the Kent economy. It is a major employer and spends £860m annually on goods and services.

"We want the Kent economy to grow and develop - for Kent to be the Garden of Enterprise."

It comes after KCC leader Paul Carter recently unveiled a host of measures to support local business.

Cllr Lynes said: "We want to develop a new relationship with business, an honest and practical relationship which delivers further support to increase opportunities and growth.

"We therefore set out ten commitments under the banner Backing Kent Business. These commitments are KCC's promise for a step change in how we support Kent business.

"I am determined to deliver these commitments to support Kent business."

Spiking victim's warning to party people

PARTYGOERS are being warned of the dangers of drink-spiking by a woman who became a victim.

Francesa Fraser, 22, has been handing out posters and drinks mats to pubs and clubs across the county to raise awareness.

Spiking is on the increase according to campaigners, who say many people do not realise how dangerous it can be.

Ms Fraser, who was given a cup of tea spiked with ecstasy, said the smoking ban had meant more peo-

ple leaving drinks unattended.

She said: "People need to make sure they have their drink with them at all times and try not to leave it anywhere when they want a cigarette."

She has also been giving out brightly-coloured bottle stoppers, which only allow a straw for drinking. "The stoppers cost just 2p," she said. "We want to make pubs and clubs aware they are inexpensive and can lower the risk of drinks being spiked."

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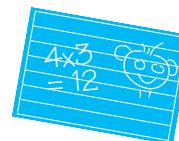
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BREAK TIME

A healthy prize for student winners

TWO students from New Line Learning Academies won a BMX bike each in a Christmas healthy-eating raffle organised by general catering manager Thierry Leroy and his teams.



BMX: NLL Academy student receives prize

The competition was designed to show students how to balance their food intake and understand the effects of proteins and calories.

The winners were Justin Tharp from NLL Academy and Alex Mann from Cornwallis Academy who each received BMX bikes donated by wholesale suppliers 3663.

Other prizes included football tickets, fruit hampers, footballs and sports bag.

Green teen's car idea

MAIDSTONE student Aaron Macdermott impressed the judges at this year's Let's mUve competition, which looks at how to revolutionise the transport industry and make the best use of the car.

He was awarded second prize for his innovative "pod" transport system, which addresses traffic congestion, pressure on public transport systems and the cost of car ownership.

Aaron won £1,000 cash and a Sony Walkman for his efforts, which caught the judges' attention for its forward-thinking approach.

Kia Motors are the main sponsors for the Let's mUve competition, which allows students to challenge conventional conceptions about the design, functionality, image, branding and sustainability of the car.

The awards are in their fourth year and run across all five campuses of the University for the Creative Arts as part of the Creative Innovations Award.

Smart driving force behind environment

BY NICK AMES

COLLEGE students have been working to help the environment in collaboration with Buckmore Park karting circuit by trying to design eco-friendly engines.

Motor Sport students from the Maidstone campus of MidKent College have spent a term researching how to adapt the circuit's karts so that they can be run using alternative, environmentally-friendly fuels.

The students will now test their ideas on sample engines provided by Honda.

The launch of the Kart Green Fuel project was marked at a ceremony held at the karting track at the top of Blue Bell Hill.

Buckmore Park owner Bill Sisley said he is keen to develop the circuit's involvement with education and environmental improvement works.

"Around 150,000 people visit Buckmore Park every year," explained Mr Sisley, "so it is extremely important that we consider using fuels that are kinder to the environment."

"Our karts' engines would need to be mechanically altered in order to make this possible, so I have called on the expertise of those at MidKent College to help me."

To aid the students in their research, Honda has supplied them with two engines, while Project1 has provided a kart chassis which can be used for testing purposes.

The learners will be building new parts for



KART AND SOUL: Motor Sport students at MidKent College have been researching greener engines for kart racing

the engines before refurbishing them to make them suitable for use with the alternative fuels.

It is hoped that following extensive testing, Buckmore Park will be in a position to start using the new fuel-types next year.

Nick Kadis, 18, who's studying for a national diploma in motor sport at MidKent College's Oakwood Park campus in Maidstone, said: "We've had to conduct a great deal of research into different fuel types, thinking about which are the most economical and environmentally friendly."

"Although these are practical considerations

we have to make as part of our course, this project has allowed us to explore different fuels in much more depth."

Fellow student Adam Fill, 18, who is from Gillingham but also studies at Oakwood Park, has been researching the use of hydrogen.

He said: "This whole project has opened my eyes to the different ways in which hydrogen can be used to aid transport."

"Buckmore Park and MidKent College have demonstrated that they are moving with the times by trying to develop ways in which to use fuels that are kinder to the environment."

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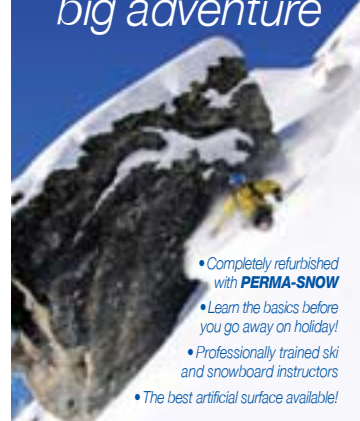
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Goodwill to all men is once again a part of the season

I AM very much of the opinion that Christmas is the best, most exciting time of the year.

I find little to dislike about it. Everyone's mood is lifted, the lights and the tinsel remind me of a happy childhood, my children are all keen to ingratiate themselves with me in order to get nice pressies, and the TV actually has something on worth watching most nights.

However, in recent years, the true spirit of Christmas has been diluted. Aside from the religious overtones and the age-old pagan traditions of this time of year, the great capitalism monster has turned it into a money-making frenzy. Nothing necessarily wrong with that, but an issue when it eclipses everything else.

Much has been written in years gone by on how commercialism is taking the soul out of this special period. But this year, amid all the doom, gloom and uncertainty which the economic downturn has dragged with it, has come

something of a refreshing change.

Because given everyone is either watching the pennies, or simply wondering where the next penny is going to come from, the crassest of commercial activity has been knocked on the head this year.

The result? We haven't all been told we are failing as parents/partners/friends if we don't splash out on some extravagant gift as a gesture of our love.

Even the most money-grabbing of multinational brands know the climate is not right for such a campaign. And few can afford such items anyway.

A bit of clever shopping around, and taking advantage of sales, you can even come out of this shopping frenzy with your credit card bill confined to just a couple of pages.

We have all been left with the feeling that, just for once, we are going to have to enjoy Christmas on a very traditional level - going back to basics, if you will.

Yes, this year we are going to be having to rely on those old chestnuts of fellow human

company to put a spring in our step.

Of family, of friends, of each other.

And without wishing to come over all Thought For A Day-ey, that can be no bad thing.

Granted, being in close proximity to friends and particularly family, can unsettle even the most placid of people, but who knows, the fact we are all in this boat of uncertainty, sailing the choppy waters of the economic storm, could actually generate something of a Blitz spirit.

It could bring us all a little closer together.

And if anything good is to come out of this miserable time of worries and fears, a gentle reminder of the goodness which resides in one another and all of mankind, could be just the tonic.

I'll certainly raise a glass of something cheap and sparkly to that.

• **EDITOR'S NOTE:** All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

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TALK TIME

RICHARD KNOX-JOHNSTON

The new chairman of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Kent talks about the organisation's role in protecting all natural areas in the county, including forest, woodland, downs, beaches, marshes and parts of the coastline.



How do you see your new role and what has been done previously that you can build on?

CPRE has seen major development during the last five years under former chairman Gary Thomas. We are in a strong position with respect to the planning system. My new role, in the main, is to facilitate our sub-committees and executive committee members to continue to provide ideas and policies for Kent's future. I also want to build and expand our membership base, particularly to younger people.

You must be honoured to have such a role in protecting the most important natural assets we have?

I feel extremely privileged to have been elected chairman for what is considered to be one of the strongest branches of CPRE in the country. We have a dedicated team of staff, members and supporters, but we always need fresh ideas from new people who want to get involved in the work we do at CPRE Kent.

What are your immediate plans and how are you going to get across the role of the organisation?

It was decided a long time ago that the name CPRE does not effectively describe what we do and is not known to Kent people. We have created a new brand which we will be launching in the spring. This will better encompass what we do at CPRE Kent and support my view that we are responsible for the whole of Kent – not just the rural areas.

What are the most important issues in Kent and nationwide affecting the management of the countryside?

Climate change is one of the biggest issues facing the county. CPRE Kent is holding an alternative energy conference event in January to promote different methods of alternative energy people can use in their homes. We are also determined to dedicate ourselves to preserving rural and recreational areas for all those who live in Kent.

YOUR LETTERS

The PC way to help the needy in Africa

After reading about the Maidstone charity which sends old computers out to Africa in last week's paper, I wanted to write in to commend its organisers.

It is heart-warming to see people using common sense to recycle unwanted goods and really help communities in the developing world.

Anyone donating computers to the charity should also feel proud of themselves.

A friend of mine recently went to Sierra Leone and was impressed to see each class at a village school had access to a computer – all of which had been donated by people in the UK.

So helping in this manner really does make a difference to the lives of children in Africa.

Alex Rodgers, from Maidstone, by email.



Stunned by police tazer gun plans

The news that Kent Police are investing cash in stun guns is not great for people who wish the force to police by consent rather than be seen as some sort of occupying force.

I understand that the way of life for many people has changed and society is no longer as cohesive as it once was.

The friendly neighbourhood bobby has probably gone forever



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NOT only can you use email and letters to respond to our stories, don't forget you can comment via our website too.

Beneath most stories on the www.yourmaidstone.co.uk website there is the facility to leave your comments on whatever YOU thought of the online article. To leave your remarks, simply click on the 'Add your comments' link and tell us what you think. And remember, www.yourmaidstone.co.uk is updated daily, bringing you the latest, breaking news from across Maidstone as well as our villages. We will include the best on these pages too – ensuring your comments reach the widest possible audience.

In addition, if you find your newsagent, supermarket or petrol station runs out of Yourmaidstone before you've picked up your copy, you never need to miss out. On www.yourmaidstone.co.uk you can access, for free, the full newspaper in our highly acclaimed e-editions.

Police bid for share of £8m stun gun funding



– but police riding around in cars, armed and very rarely interacting with the public unless it is in a confrontational way is not good news for anyone. Rather than spending all this

cash, what about a few more officers carrying out foot patrols, talking to people and generally making their presence known.

Harry Miles, by email.

Kingsnorth protest a lesson for police

Vernon Coaker, minister at the Home Office, has been forced to apologise publicly for misleading

statements about policing at Kingsnorth.

He has had to retract his claim that 70 police officers were injured by protestors. Only twelve police officers had 'reportable injuries,' and those were mainly insect bites and cut fingers.

This does not provide evidence of violence by the protestors, and does not justify the excessive policing at the Climate Camp.

I was one of many who complained about the over-zealous policing at Kingsnorth.

My main worry is Kent residents left horrified at the excessive policing they witnessed will have lost faith in the force.

Policing in a democracy relies on the co-operation and support of the population. Once trust is lost it is extremely difficult to regain it.

The behaviour of the police contributed to a loss of trust in them by ordinary people. The misleading statement by the minister will exacerbate that loss of trust.

The minister will be meeting with the Association of Chief Police Officers to discuss "the lessons to be learned" from Kingsnorth.

I hope he will take into account the long term relationship of the police with those whose co-operation they so badly need and will conclude that future peaceful demonstrations should be policed more sensitively than was the case at Kingsnorth.

Dr Hazel Dawe, chair of Kent Green Party, by email.

Shame on Woolies bargain hunters

How upsetting it must have been for employees of Woolworths to watch as people scrambled for bargains across the stores when they knew they were about to lose their jobs.

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Have the people who grabbed these so-called bargains no feeling for the thoughts of those who knew they were losing their jobs at Christmas?

Tracey Lewis, by email.

I Khan believe he was not picked for Test

It is a shame Amjad Khan was not picked for England in the recent test against India, which the home side won in such dramatic fashion.

I am sure he would have shown far more fight than bowlers such as Anderson and Harmison, who seemed to lack any sort of idea of



how to bowl to the admittedly excellent Indian batsmen.

I feel that his style and ability to reverse swing the ball would have proved far more effective in trying to curtail the rampant

Indians than anyone else in the England side – with the possible exception of Andrew Flintoff.

He has shown this for Kent and he should have had the chance in the First Test to show it for England.

Brian Ledger, from Maidstone, by email.

Healthy economy is key to job security

I would like to support Ms Grootendorst's comments in last week's letter's page about the employability of people who have never or seldom worked, and her

Bureaucracy is the reason we're broke
Only job security and jobs for all mean a healthy economy. How can there be four consecutive months of business unemployment? There have never been as many people on the dole as there are now. The government and administrative services have been cut back. Their numbers are so small that they are not even mentioned in the media. We are not a wealthy nation. We are a nation of the poor. We are a nation of the unemployed. We are a nation of the underemployed. We are a nation of the overemployed. We are a nation of the underpaid. We are a nation of the overpaid. We are a nation of the underworked. We are a nation of the overworked. We are a nation of the underpaid. We are a nation of the overpaid. We are a nation of the underworked. We are a nation of the overworked.

E Egan, from Harrietsham, by email.

Take Hoy challenge for cancer charity

As a World, Commonwealth, and Olympic gold medalist I know all about setting goals and taking on challenges, even when they might seem impossible to achieve.

That's why I would encourage anyone looking for a challenge to sign up for one of Marie Curie Cancer Care's wonderful Rise to the Challenge events.

The Rise to the Challenge events programme has something for everyone, both at home and abroad; from treks in the Peruvian Andes to walking in the Lake District, as well as abseiling at some of the UK's most stunning sites.

And of course, my favourite, cycle challenges such as Cork to Dublin or the Canadian Rockies, so if the cycling doesn't leave you breathless the scenery certainly will!

No no matter where you are, what your age or ability, you can get fit and get active with Marie Curie Cancer Care.

And what makes taking on these

condemnation of the overblown size and low efficiency of much of the public sector.

I have to take issue with her opening sentence however.

Only a healthy economy can provide job security and jobs for all.



challenges all the more worthwhile is that the money you raise from them will make it possible for the terminally ill to be cared for and spend their last days in the comfort of their own homes, surrounded by their family and friends.

I have had personal experiences of cancer within my own family and I understand the huge difference this choice can make.

My next cycling challenge will be the World Championships in 2009, but I also hope I will succeed in inspiring you to take on an event for Marie Curie Cancer Care this year; these will be my own personal challenges. What will yours be?

Why not check out www.mariecurie.org.uk/challenge, www.mariecurie.org.uk/challenge for inspiration or call 08700 340 040.

Chris Hoy, Olympic triple gold medalist in Beijing 2008 and BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2008, by email.

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WIN a VIP family trip around Port Lympne

THE Aspinall Foundation, in conjunction with KOS Media are offering one lucky family a VIP trip around Port Lympne Wild Animal Park.

This will include free entry to the park and a trip in a bespoke safari vehicle around the African Experience where over 300 animals roam in a 100 acre site overlooking breathtaking views of the Channel towards France. Later, the lucky winners can explore the 600 acre park discovering animals such as lions, tigers, snow and clouded leopards, red pandas, numerous species of monkey, black rhino and elephants as well as the famous collection of western lowland gorillas.

There are two ways to enter the competition and the first ensures, with little effort on your part, you are able to regularly help raise funds to save a variety of endangered species.

All you have to do is sign up for a free Aspinall prepaid Maestro card provided in conjunction with Mastercard and M-cube. Normally the prepaid card costs £9.99, but in conjunction with this competition it won't cost you a penny.

The card can be used like a debit card but is topped up like a mobile phone and 100 per cent of the profits associated with using it are given back to the Aspinall Foundation.



By using your card, you will help to support the Foundation's African Projects in the Congo and Gabon as well as our work in the UK and other parts of the world. The prepaid card can be used to shop securely online, spend while on holiday, manage business expenses and cash flow, help children budget their pocket money or just use it for all of your daily spending – both in the UK and abroad! Every transaction will help the conservation and breeding programmes at Port Lympne and Howletts Wild Animal Parks.

The card is absolutely free, no credit check is required and it is quick, easy and secure to apply on line. The card is a safe alternative to carrying cash and is accepted worldwide.

The account can be managed online with instant top up via the Post Office

available too. The card is totally safe for all online transactions and protects you from identity fraud. It also gives you a load of discounts on High Street products including a 10 per cent discount in Howletts and Port Lympne cafes and gift shops.

To enter the competition and obtain this card just visit www.savinggorillas.com and insert "KOS" when asked where you heard about the card. In the drop down box below insert "KOS". On receipt of the card you can top it up online and take advantage of the rewards on offer. It can be used anywhere you see the Maestro or MasterCard logo worldwide.

However, if you don't want to sign up for the card you can also still enter the competition by sending a postcard with the heading "ASPINALL PREPAID CARD – KOS" with your name, e-mail address (if applicable), address, and daytime telephone number to Marketing Department (KOS comp), Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, Lympne, Near Hythe, Kent, CT21 4PD. The closing date is January 5th, 2009.

For more information about Howletts, Port Lympne and the Aspinall Foundation see www.totallywild.net.

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Gigs live up to an indulgent promise

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

THE GOOD people at the Gulbenkian Theatre have put thoughts of Christmas over-indulgence aside to ensure the new year starts at pace.

The Canterbury theatre's arts team has resisted the temptation to join the rest of the working world in the annual pre-Christmas wind-down by lining up five nights of top music in January.

The month kicks off with jazz, moves on to 60s legends and finishes with Eastern drums.

There's more on the Gulbenkian's January programme below. For further details, visit www.kent.ac.uk/gulbenkian.

Monday, January 12 - Open Mic Jazz Singers' Night, 8pm.

Wannabe Louis Armstrongs and Nina Simones can take to the stage at the theatre's open mic night.

Tickets cost £4.90.

Monday, January 19 - John Leyton, Craig Douglas and The Flames, 7.45pm

Sixties singing stars John Leyton and Craig Douglas will perform at the Kent University Rock'n'Roll Society gig, backed by The Flames.

Between them, John and Craig recorded massive hits which defined the era, enjoying chart success with hits such as Johnny Remember Me, Wild Wind and Only Sixteen.

Tickets £10, concessions £8.

Saturday, January 24 - Paul Jones and Digby Fairweather, 7.45pm



The show features the dynamic new teaming of Paul Jones - 60s chart-topping star of Manfred Mann, the Manfreds and later his own Blues Band - and Digby Fairweather's Half Dozen, poll-winners of Marston's British Jazz Awards small group category 2005/6.

Tickets cost £20

Wednesday, January 28 - Jazz @ 5, 5pm to 6pm

University students and staff musicians will perform jazz standards and vocal numbers at the Gulbenkian Café Bar, giving stressed-out students an ideal day to wind down.



TASTY OFFERINGS: Dulsori (left) and Paul Jones of Manfred Mann fame are just two of the musical treats to help ease you into the new year at Canterbury's Gulbenkian

The hour-long performance is free and open to all.

Friday, January 30 - Dulsori, 7.45pm

Dulsori perform their Drums of Korea show on Friday, January 30, bringing the month's music to a close.

The band, whose name translates as 'heartbeat of the land', were formed in 1984 to preserve traditions and to promote the Korean traditional performing arts.

They will perform their Drums of Korea show, which has taken audiences across the country by storm. Tickets cost £15.

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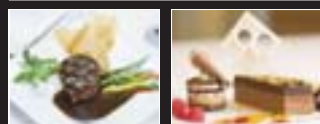


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A special new year offer sees the restaurants open until 1am on new year's eve with Thai dancing from 8pm, and a set menu and free glass of wine.

Loyalty card holders can also enjoy a free bottle of wine to go with their excellent meal.

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The initiative and creativity of the staff at Thai Square has been rewarded by the ever growing list of satisfied customers who return time and time again to celebrate the hospitality Thais are so noted for.

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Branch out into tasty local fare

■ The Lime Tree on the Square

THIS restaurant has been in business for eight years and offers an impressive array of European cuisine amid the leafy centre of Lenham.

The best of England is also on the menu, with Kent produce just part of a memorable dining experience courtesy of renowned chef Riccardo Isolini, who loves to add an Italian twist to food.

The best-selling dish at the moment is pan fried medallions of venison, served with creamy mash potato, braised red cabbage, juniper berries and red wine jus.

Also hugely popular is local Westwell lamb, served on crusted mint and root vegetables with sautéed potatoes.

Recently voted the best hotel-restaurant in the county, the venue has a huge reputation for quality and service among discerning diners.

Its vibrant modern style sits comfortably alongside the oak-beamed 13th century building, creating a smart and welcoming environment.

The chef constantly ensures the monthly



menu balances each ingredient to complement the other, creating a dish which is truly unique with modern and light touches.

The restaurant is renowned for its commitment to excellence and diners return time and time again to see what new delights turn up on the ever evolving menu, which ensures the best local produce comes to the table.

CHEF RECOMMENDS

The Lime Tree on the Square

Start with seared Falmouth scallops and tiger prawn brochette or Alfonso mango and coriander salsa.
For the main: pan fried medallions of venison with creamy mash potato, braised red cabbage, juniper berries and red wine jus. Then for dessert try the chocolate fondant. Finish with a selection of English cheeses and glass of vintage port wine, followed by coffee.

Thai Square

Panang Gae ping: barbecue marinated New Zealand Lamb skewers, accompanied with aromatic curry sauce and pickled vegetables are a great starter. Then try Pad Pad Krapow: slice of duck sautéed in garlic and chilli sauce, with crispy basil leaves. Enjoy this accompanied with royal fried rice: prawn and crab meat fried rice with egg and vegetable.

The Wild Duck Inn

This year's Christmas menu is home cured gravadlax with honey and mustard dressing followed by poached salmon steak with a white wine and coriander sauce. Complete the meal with a selection of cheese and biscuits with grapes and celery followed by mince pies and coffee

The Village

With a new menu on the way and exciting Christmas and New Year Celebrations, The Village Hotel is the place to be seen. Particular favourites are the grilled rump of lamb served with creamed white beans and spinach. Another hot favourite is the prime 8oz fillet steak served on your own personal hot rock, you can cook at your table, meaning every mouthful is sizzling hot and done to perfection!

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HE'S BEHIND YOU! Aladdin is at the Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. Below left, King of the Jungle Joe Swash is Buttons in Cinderella at the Central Theatre, Chatham, while Steve Guttenberg comes all the way from Hollywood to Bromley to star in Cinderella

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for families

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(*booking fee applies)FAMILY fun is in plentiful
supply this Christmas with
an array of pantomimes
across the county.Emma Barton, who played Honey
in EastEnders, stars alongside children's
TV favourite Stephen Mulhern
and local legend Dave Lee in Snow
White and the Seven Dwarfs.The show runs at The Marlowe
Theatre, Canterbury, until Sunday, January
18. Phone 01227 787787, or book
online at www.marlowetheatre.com.Jack and the Beanstalk at the
Hazlitt Theatre, Maidstone, stars former
Hollyoaks actor Jake Hendriks,
who played Father Kieron in the teen
soap. Catch him in action until
Sunday, January 4. Tickets are avail-

FAMILY PANTOMIME FUN

Various dates
Various venues, countywideable from 01622 758611 or www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk.The cast of Dick Whittington is
ready to take audiences at the Leas
Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on a journey to
find the streets paved with gold.Kate Wright is Dick, while Bob
Osborne plays Sarah the Cook and
Natalie Hubbard is Captain Cods
Eye. Tickets for the show, which runs
until Saturday, January 10, are avail-
able from 0870 4000890 or www.leascliffhall.org.uk.Local actor Alex Tomkins is in Ali
Baba and the Forty Thieves at the
Theatre Royal Margate until Satur-
day, January 3. To book, phone 01227
787787 or 0845 1301786.The Bill's Chris Ellison pounds a
new beat as the dastardly Abanazar
in Aladdin at the Assembly Hall
Theatre, Tunbridge Wells. He stars
alongside GMTV's Toonattik's Anna
Williamson until Sunday, January 4.
Phone 01892 530613/532072, or see
www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.The Central Theatre in Chatham is
staging Cinderella this year and I'm
A Celebrity... star Joe Swash swings
in to play Buttons until Sunday,
January 4. Phone 01634 338338, or
see www.medway.gov.uk/theatres.Captain Hook's sidekick Smee is
played by Joe Pasquale in Peter Pan
at the Orchard Theatre, Dartford.
Enjoy the fun until Sunday, January11. For tickets, phone 01322 220000,
or see www.orchardtheatre.co.uk.Dick Whittington shoulders his
backpack at the Granville Theatre,
Ramsgate, until Sunday, January 4.
For tickets, phone 01843 591750.Police Academy star Steve Gutten-
berg is in Cinderella at The Churchill
in Bromley. He is playing alongside
comedienne Helen Lederer until
Sunday, January 18. Phone the box
office on 0870 060 6620, or book at
www.churchilltheatre.co.uk.Former Big Brother housemate Paul
'Bubble' Ferguson stars in Snow
White and the Seven Dwarfs at the Swallows
Leisure Centre, Sittingbourne.The show, which runs until Sunday,
December 28, also features CBBC's
Tracy Beaker star Ben Hanson and
Briony Price, who rose to fame on
How Do You Solve A Problem Like
Maria? To book, call 01795 420420.FOR MORE THEATRE AND ENTERTAINMENT VISIT @ yourkenttv.co.uk

with
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SAFARI

Thursday, January 1
Port Lympne
Wild Animal Park, near Hythe

START the New Year by connecting with nature on a breathtaking safari at Port Lympne Wild Animal Park.

Following the excesses of Christmas, a ride in the park's specially commissioned vehicle would be just the way to blow away the cobwebs.

Discover the many animals roaming free in the 100-acre African Experience site, against the backdrop of stunning views across Romney Marsh towards France.

Visitors could spot giraffe, zebra, wildebeest, ostrich, black rhino, sitatunga, blue wildebeest, eland, Defassa waterbuck, red lechwe, Grant's and Grevy's zebras and more.

Each safari tour will be accompanied by a guide who will answer questions about conservation projects and the animals. Set in 600 acres, the park is home to the largest breeding herd of



Picture: NEWTLE BRICK

black rhinos outside Africa and its group of 25 western lowland gorillas welcomed its newest baby just weeks ago.

Safaris leave at 10am and midday, and places must be booked in advance.

Tickets cost £12 for adults, £9 for children and are free for under-fours, with discounts for groups of six or more.

For more information, you can visit www.totallywild.net, or phone 01303 264647.

I SHOULD COCO BOXING DAY MASKED BALL

Friday, December 26
The Loft, Maidstone

CLUBBERS can expect to bump into anyone from Batman to Fonejacker at a special event on Boxing Day. The I Should Coco Boxing

Day Masked Ball will be one of the indie scene's biggest dates so far, inviting clubbers to continue the Christmas celebrations with a

mammoth evening of top tunes and festive fun.

So, music fans, escape the family game of Monopoly and head for the dance-floor to work off those mince pies.

In Room 1, resident DJs Graeme Doyle and Liam K will be playing the best in indie and electro, while in Room 2 Paul Richards of local band One Day Elliott will join Dan Slope, star of Five's hit series Human Guinea Pigs, to showcase their rock, emo and heavy-metal sounds.

With some great drinks deals, I Should Coco is gearing up for another night of great entertainment on a credit-crunching budget.

Entry costs £4 before 11pm and £5 after, with a £1 discount for NUS members.

For more information, call 07739 713890 or email jeff@club-class.org.

You can find out more about other upcoming events online at www.myspace.com/ishouldcocomaiddstone.



FRANCES KNIGHT

Wednesday, December 31
Harbour Café Bar, Margate

WELCOME the New Year in the company of acclaimed jazz pianist Frances Knight.

The Canterbury-based performer has been involved in the London and South East jazz scene for many years and has impressed critics with her fantastic musical skills.

She has written, performed and recorded with artists such as Jan Ponsford, Sarah Jane Morris, Paul Booth and Tony Coe.

Showing a taste for the exotic, Knight also plays with London's hottest Argentinian tango band Los Mareados. She also studies the bandoneon, a small accordion popular in Latin America.

Her appearance is the latest in a new series of concerts linked to the famous Vortex Jazz Club in London.

Floor singers are invited to take part in the gig and it would be an impressive addition to any CV to say they had performed with Frances Knight. For more information, phone the venue on 01843 290110.

Tickets for the New Year's Eve event cost £36, including a three-course dinner. Phone or visit the Harbour Café Bar to book.



Picture: MARTIN ELLIOTT

MAIDSTONE LEISURE

Talented acts line up to entertain in the lounge

ENJOY the break between Christmas and New Year at the Grey Lady Music Lounge in Tunbridge Wells.

The twice-weekly showcase of talent, Paul Dunton and Guests, will welcome Mechanical Sunrise, Henry Willard, Tehillah Commission and headliners Hoath to the venue in The Pantiles on Sunday. The event starts at 7.30pm and tickets cost £4. For details see www.myspace.com/paulduntonandguests or www.thegreylady.co.uk.

See in the New Year at a fabulous VIP party

FEEL Full Length and Fabulous this New Year's Eve at the G Casino at Westwood Cross, Broadstairs.

The casino's party will offer VIP treatment to guests, who will be welcomed with champagne, a photo shoot, a magician, a live band and a disco. There will be a buffet and the chance to party into the New Year with an ABBA tribute show and late barbecue.

Tickets cost £50, with £5 from each going to the Pilgrim's Hospice. Phone 01843 579999, or see www.gcasino.co.uk.

New Year's Eve party is right up your street

NEW Year's Eve will be celebrated in style at the Orange Street Music Venue in Canterbury.

The act had yet to be confirmed at the time of writing, but there will be quality live music to help revellers usher in 2009. People can also expect good food, fine wine, champagne, drinks offers and good company to welcome the New Year. The party starts at 8pm - see www.orangestreetmusic.com.

Fun for all the family at laughter pantomime

JOIN Simple Simon for some traditional fun in the family show Little Bo Peep: The Laughter Pantomime.

Presented by Gordon Clarkson, the show features a talented cast performing lots of song, dance and comedy with audience participation, too.

Little Bo Peep will provide festive fun for the family. The show will be at Westgate Pavilion, Westgate-on-Sea, from Boxing Day to December 28. Tickets cost £8/£4. Phone 01843 835611.

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MAIDSTONE SHOPPING

Last-minute present buying's a close shave

ANYONE searching for a last-minute Christmas present could give the gift of immaculate grooming with Remington.

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Men can save face with the PG410 Designer Stubble Kit (£29.99), which will help them maintain an effortless five o'clock shadow. Available from Boots and other leading retailers.

Brush up on some great festive gifts for teeth

HELP promote oral health and give your child a fun stocking-filler with a TePe Christmas toothbrush.

The festively-decorated toothbrushes are available in both child and adult sizes and help make brushing more fun.

With families looking forward to a feast of Christmas fare it is as important as ever to keep teeth clean and fresh.

Priced at just £1.49 and approved by the British Dental Health Foundation, TePe Christmas toothbrushes are available from dental practices and pharmacies.

Don't miss out on last day to Select an outfit

TODAY is the last day shoppers can take advantage of great savings at Select.

The ladies' clothes store at Westwood Cross in Thanet has been offering 50 per cent off selected partywear throughout December and 20 per cent off outerwear.

Hurry to the shopping centre today to avoid missing out on the last pre-Christmas discounts.

For details about events at Westwood Cross, see www.westwoodx.co.uk.

Mediterranean luxury is yours for less in sale

BUY luxury Italian home furnishings at discounted prices at Natuzzi's in House of Fraser, Maidstone.

The department – which can be found on the first floor of the Fremlin Walk store – is offering 20 per cent off all full-price items until January 31, so do not miss the chance to start the New Year with some fabulous new furnishings for your home.

Terms and conditions apply. For details of other events at Fremlin Walk, see www.fremlinwalk.co.uk.

Winter wonderland to go on after Christmas

BARGAIN-hunters can still enjoy festive fun at Bluewater even when Christmas Day has passed.

The centre's Winter Wonderland offers plenty of entertainment for visitors of all ages, from the ice rink and live performances on the bandstand to cooking demonstrations at the Ice Palace.

Winter Wonderland, which was opened by former Spice Girl Geri Halliwell, will run until Saturday, January 3.

For more information, visit the website at www.bluewater.co.uk.



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YOUR TV REVIEW

DOCTOR WHO
BBC One, 6pm, Christmas Day

BY TOM BETTS

WHAT better way to celebrate the fact that your stomach is groaning under the weight of too much festive gorging than with an evening in front of the box on Christmas Day?

While some families like to play charades or talk to each other, most sensible people decline any of that nonsense and prefer to zone out and ignore everyone else for as long as possible. I call these wise souls, 'my kind of people'.

This scenario is what a show like Doctor Who was made for and the Christmas installment, The Next Doctor, should keep you entertained for a time as the inevitable inter-family bickering begins.

The Christmas show may not even throw up the answer to the big question at all, (that being, who will be the next incarnation of the Doctor?), but at least we should all tune in to see just who may fill David Tennant's size nines.

Last year's effort, with Kylie Minogue and a giant flying spaceship called the Titanic was very disappointing and not of the quality now expected for the BBC's standard-bearing Christmas show, a mantle once carried by EastEnders – even if that now seems odd.

Those stomping party-poopers the Cybermen are back for this year's adventure and are sure to be wreaking havoc in a were-not-quite-as-good-as-the-Daleks style.

But most of all, it is just who will be Who that will fascinate most.

David Tennant has been a huge hit with the masses, and in particular



WHO'S WHO?: Christmas is the time to tune in and see who will take over from David Tennant

younger fans, but among much of the hardcore fan base he is seen as too lightweight or not quirky enough to be thought of as a classic Doctor.

David Morrissey, who has been cropping up in the trailers to the episode, is hot favourite to take on the role, but surely that would be a little too obvious.

You would hope that the creators will want to pull off a surprise and will have kept the character's next face under wraps.

Other contenders include Little Britain's David Walliams, Cold Feet's Jimmy Nesbitt and John Simm, who appeared before as the hero's nemesis, The Master.

Paterson Joseph, star of Peep Show could become the first black actor to take on the role or maybe Jennifer Saunders will become the first female of time travel.

Whoever does end up occupying the Tardis the transformation will be one of the most memorable television moments of the year, and it's much better than talking and stuff.

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

RETREATING to a quiet, private place puts you back in touch with your true essence. Recently, your identity has been wrapped up in your social circle. Now you're starting to realise there are differences between you and your friends. For one thing, you're more visionary.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)

EVEN though you're a creature of habit, you aren't immune to adventure. If you feel you're in a rut this is a great time to make a huge transformation. Travelling abroad will be wonderfully enriching. This journey could put you on the path of romance.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

THIS week is wonderful for embarking on a whole new routine. Improving your diet and launching an exercise routine will both pay off handsomely. If your job has been jeopardising your health, you need to find another situation. A new position could fall in your lap.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

WHETHER you know it or not, your words have tremendous power so watch what you say. Get into the habit of offering constructive criticisms and optimistic forecasts. Although it's not in your nature to view the glass as half full, you can overcome this tendency.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

BE mindful of the company you keep. If you've been hanging around a bunch of pessimists, their attitude will cloud your thinking. When left to your own devices, your true spirit will shine through. Soon, you'll start attracting the sort of people who enjoy your optimism.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 22)

A POSSIBLE affair with someone sexy causes you to see yourself in a whole new light. You may be inspired to undergo an elaborate program of self improvement. What once seemed to be an inevitable arrangement now looks like a personal choice.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

You've always prided yourself on being a practical, responsible person, but now you're starting to suspect you've been missing out on life. Once you get an initial adrenaline rush, you'll become more daring. Friends and family will be surprised as you yearn for adventure.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)

HAVING a secret stash of cash may appeal to you. Conventional wisdom says that having a year's worth of salary tucked into savings can prove liberating. You'll be much less prone to stay in a troubled relationship or stick with a terrible job if you have the means to strike get out.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)

You're starting to wonder whether you're on the right career path. Changing track will be difficult, but worthwhile. You've been blessed with an entrepreneurial spirit. Starting your own business is a distinct possibility. Explore opportunities related to investments or construction.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)

YOU may feel drawn to an intellectual or studious person with an air of mystery. If you're already in a relationship, you'll need to think things through thoroughly before you make any decisions. Finding out what makes each other tick can greatly improve your relationship.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

LAUNCHING a home renovation will be stressful, but rewarding. A sensitive creature like you can't handle all of that sawing, hammering, and dust. Search for a temporary resting place in a quiet, secluded neighbourhood. This will give you a chance to explore your emotions.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

FACING your deepest fear is scary, but empowering. Status has always been very important to you. Without it, you've always worried that people won't respect you. Actually, the truth is different. People love you for who you are, not what you do.

• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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The holiday starts with an escorted **afternoon** departure on Eurostar from St Pancras International, London. We travel to Lille or Paris where, we break our journey with an overnight stay at a hotel. Early the next morning we join the TGV to Marseilles, arriving early-to-mid afternoon. From here we have a short transfer to the Orient Queen to start our 10-night cruise.

During the cruise, relax and watch the world go by, enjoy great food and entertainment, and venture ashore at the numerous ports of call. You can also choose from a comprehensive selection of optional shore excursions taking-in: **Portofino, Pompeii, Athens, Ancient Ephesus, Mount Etna** and more.

At the end of the cruise we disembark after breakfast in Marseilles and take the TGV to Lille or Paris where we join the Eurostar to St Pancras, London, arriving early-to-mid evening.

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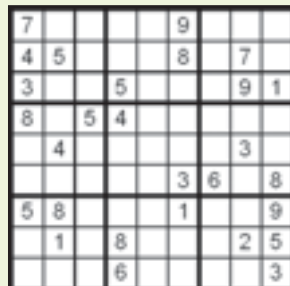
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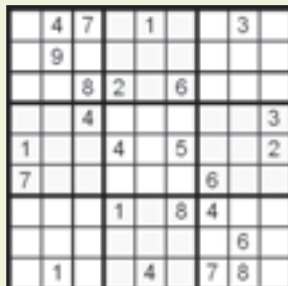
EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Hot stuff with aspic cooked inside (8)
- 6 Bet Sid converted flat (6)
- 9 Hooligan Virginia destroyed land (6)
- 10 Floor covering, sort used by printers (8)
- 11 Not being enterprising having a house on the pavement (7,5)
- 13 Theatre-in-the-round (5)
- 14 Corner wriggler used as bait (9)
- 17 Replace catalogue - clot! (9)
- 19 Earthen pot obtained during said sea-trip (5)
- 21 Knowing enough to be reassured by the doctor? (4-8)
- 24 He quijs about trapping youth leader with bodily development (8)
- 25 Means of removing hard water from windscreen perhaps (2-4)
- 26 Contort becoming whiter (6)
- 27 Oddly in a rough way (8)

DOWN

- 2 Jack's reportedly following a Dutch football team (4)
- 3 Catch seat first on part of bicycle (9)
- 4 Accountant left one company cotton cloth (6)
- 5 Plant, one taking on large number (7)
- 6 Lying Ben removed graciously and in a kindly way (8)
- 7 Some trade terms used are enough to put one off (5)
- 8 Deprive little devil taking on his version (10)
- 12 Nearly all to catch the girl completely (10)
- 15 Web found everything in broad earth (9)
- 16 150 I name I question going to eastern hospital (8)
- 18 US author found the gold hidden with more gold (7)
- 20 Smear some of this mud generally in (6)
- 22 Is last character taken in by officer or composer? (5)
- 23 Ringing laughter (4)

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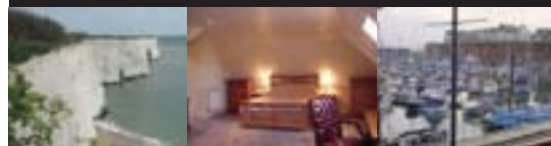
ACROSS

- 1 Fourth part (8)
- 6 Drooped (6)
- 9 Snuffle (6)
- 10 Fashion shop (8)
- 11 Rowdy frolic (6-6)
- 13 Experience (5)
- 14 Male wedding attendants (9)
- 17 I wondered (anag.) (9)
- 19 Devastate (5)
- 21 Myopic (5-7)
- 24 Caribou (8)
- 25 Stumble (6)
- 26 Pointed writing instrument (6)
- 27 Dire (8)

DOWN

- 2 Bone in arm (4)
- 3 Do resolve (anag.) (5,4)
- 4 On fire (6)
- 5 Cylindrical (7)
- 6 Resonating chamber (8)
- 7 Showiness (5)
- 8 Cheerful enthusiasm (10)
- 12 Ornamentation (10)
- 15 Stood across (9)
- 16 Greek hero (8)
- 18 Had a bet (7)
- 20 Itself (anag.) (6)
- 22 Of the kidneys (5)
- 23 Lima's country (4)

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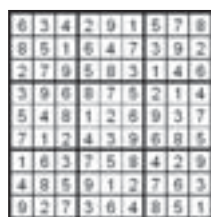
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HARD



CRYPTIC SOLUTION No67

ACROSS: 1 Slavery 5 Ogreish 9 Ivor 10
Swan around 12 Strike up 13 Grease 14
Relief worker 17 Presentiment 21 Inform
23 Biarritz 24 Buttoned-up 25 Ashy 26
All told 27 Jetting. DOWN: 2 Levity 3
Verdigris 4 Russell 6 Glasgow 7 Evoke 8
Sinister 11 Apple-pie bed 15 Retardant 16
Tranquil 18 Nominal 19 Example 20 Itchen
22 Octet.

QUICK SOLUTION No68

ACROSS: 1 Quadrant 6 Saged 9 Snivel
10 Bounteous 11 Razzle-dazzle 13 Enjoy
14 Groomsman 17 Rindown 19 Wreck
21 Short-sighted 24 Rindown 25 Raker
26 Stylus 27 Dreadful. DOWN: 2 Uria 3
Dover sole 4 Abaze 5 Tubular 6 Soundbox
7 Gift 8 Ebulience 12 Enrichment 15
Shradled 16 Odysses 18 Wagered 20
Stifle 22 Reel 23 Peru.

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WOMEN seeking men

I LOVE FOOTBALL
Fun to be with blonde female, 25, 5'10, loves football(!), going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man to be my soulmate. Ryan from Whitehall, please call again, leave contact details! Box 44694

TAKE ME OUT
Single mum, 32, cuddly large female, 5'8, dark brown hair, seeking someone to have fun, a dance, some drinks, meals and more with. Box 43894

HORSES FOR COURSES...
Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2, blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013

CANTERBURY TALE
Single mum, 2 of 32, WLTW someone, kind, caring and considerate, for nights in/out and cinema. Ryan from Whitehall, please call again, leave contact details! Box 40670

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FUN-LOVING FEMALE

Attractive, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, well intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for a happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 430734

FRIENDSHIP, MAYBE MORE

Single mum, 36, I've got hazel eyes and dark hair, and enjoy the cinema, meals and out. WLTW sincere, attractive, genuine male. Box 446940

TRY ME

Ashford based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring, and loving man. I have 2 kids, and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446985

MEND A BROKEN HEART

Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasted! Box 938053

LOVE TO LOVE YOU

Lovely female, 36, 5'14, medium-large build, blonde hair, blue eyes, own house, loves walking, going out, the usual! Seeking male for LTR. Box 438102

SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5'14, brown hair, green eyes, likes swimming, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428995

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

37yr old female, 2 kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5'10, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my someone special. Box 446552

YOU'LL SMILE IF YOU DIAL

Bubbly 40yr old female, enjoys beaches, pubs, clubs, with a like-minded, caring male to share fun times with. Box 435102

FUN AND ROMANCE

Attractive woman, 41, 5'10, blonde hair/blue eyes. I'd like to meet a guy for romance and fun, enjoy cinema, pubs, meals out. Box 447009

PASSION FOR YOU

Cute, single mum of 4, 30yrs old, Kent based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897983

FROM ME TO YOU

Tall leggy brunette, 38, recently bereaved, enjoys meals out or nights in, dry white wine, a good movie & cuddles, seeking a male for companionship. Box 867404

YOUNG-AT-HEART

Attractive 38yr old female, dark brown hair, blue eyes, curvy physique, likes days out, music, concerts, cinema, walking, cycling, seeks loving, fun male, for friendship/relationship. Box 901693

BLONDE AMBITION

Bubbly, cuddly, blonde single mum, 38, 5'0", likes dogs, reading, pubs, cosy nights in, having a laugh, looking for that right male for LTR. Box 905614

ANIMAL LOVER?

Nurse, 37yrs, 2 kids, 5'10, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, cooking, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for a kind, caring, loyal male Box 431557

ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!

Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5'15, lots of energy! likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724

FAIRY TALE ENDING

Good-looking slim blonde, 42, tired of kissing frogs, seeking an intelligent, solvent professional male to be my prince. Box 446521

WHITE ROSES

Very attractive female, 42, slim, green eyes, high cheek bones, wickered SOH! Loves to make people laugh, seeking intelligent, well-mannered, kind man for friendship/relationship. Box 446543

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS

Laid-back single mum, very bubbly, outgoing and intelligent, 43, enjoys social life, drinks, meals, cinema, looking to start afresh with someone new, easygoing and life-loving. Box 446102

LOVELY JOSEPHINE

Passionate and fun-loving 43yr old female, enjoys clubbing, meals and out cooking, WLTW a male to share evenings out with. Box 445225

FAST LOVE

Single lady, 43, likes gardening, eating out, cinema, music and more, seeking male for friendship and maybe more. Box 446991

YOU NEVER KNOW

Kind, loving and caring mum, 43, 5'10, round but cuddly! Just looking for someone to share my life with...how about you? St. Leonards-on-Sea. Box 446457

THIS STATE OF INDEPENDENCE

Hard-working female, 41, 5'4", bubbly, independent woman, love to laugh, socialising with friends, looking for independent man who values TLC. Box 414156

DEAL OR NO DEAL? (IN DEAL)

Deal-based lady, 43, divorced, brunette, green eyes, 5'10, likes going out, pubs, clubs, cinema, shopping, walks, loves films and all sports except cricket. Box 430384

MISS JULIE

Bubbly blonde, 44, stupid and like having a laugh, good company, friendship, would like to meet new friends for hopeful love... Box 888162

GENUINE REPLIES ONLY

Bubbly female, 44, brunette, n/s, medium/large build, enjoys singing and theatre. Would love to meet a decent fun-loving guy, similar age, pref non-smoker for LTR. Box 445955

LOVING, CARING & HONEST

Hard working single mum, young 44yr old, 5'10, medium build, enjoys dining out, holidays, cinema and walks, WLTW a caring and genuine male for friendship/relationship. Box 444751

INTERESTED? GIVE ME A CALL

Homey traditional lady, 44, 5'10, slim-medium build, non smoker, love life, animals, my dog, walks along the harbour, country pubs, WLTW similar guy for romance... Box 446277

MAKE ME LAUGH!

Fun extrovert person, 45, likes cinema, going out, meals, socialising, 5'10, dark brown hair/eyes, curvy, seeking nice guy to start off as friends with. Box 442905

COULD IT BE YOU?

I'm 44, slim, 5'10, a redhead, love nights out, socialising, looking for friendship initially and hopefully more later on. Box 889800

EVERLASTING LOVE

Beautiful black female, 46, WLTW a caring, gentle and loving gentleman, 45-60, 5'10, pref a bit sporty, for a everlasting relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 445407

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and TLC. Seaford. Box 444366

HAPPY GO LUCKY

Sincere, happy woman, with GSOH. I'm 5'10, with short brown hair, brown eyes. I have lots of interests and WLTW similar guy. Box 895019

BE MY FRIEND AND LOVER

Bubbly, caring lady, 47, divorced with 2 teenagers, dark hair, medium build, into cooking, driving, love to talk, laugh and have fun, seeking a normal guy Box 425952

DIG DEEPER

Genuine, adventurous, energetic lady, mid 50s, 5'10, loves all dancing, walks, dogs and films; seeks inspiring male for fun evenings, spilling and pampering. Box 884172

HELPI

Positive, vivacious female, 59, 5'10, loves art, seaside walks, music, seeks tallish, kind, caring male to grow old with...disgracefully. Box 444943

THE BEST CHRISTMAS OF THEM ALL

Divorced lovely female, 61, 5'10, slim build, looking for similar male with GSOH for chats, dates, friendship and perhaps more. Box 446987

CUDDLE UP

Medium-build lady, 62, 5'10, likes dancing, walking, eating out, WLTW a caring and considerate male to stay in with on a cold winter's evening. Box 445123

IS THERE SOMEONE OUT THERE?

Lovely lady, 62, 5'10, medium build, likes dancing, brown hair/eyes, likes dancing, walks, animal, seeks caring, considerate, outgoing male for friendship leading to LTR. Box 446382

COMPANIONSHIP, LAUGHTER, HOPEFULLY MORE

Curvy & cuddly, outgoing, friendly, honest female, 53, 5'10, larger build, fair hair, likes socialising, country walks, theatre, cinema, music, swimming, WLTW similar loving male. Box 443642

ARE YOU MY BOND... JAMES BOND?

Kind, caring, attractive lady, young 53, 5'7", slim, brown hair/eyes, N/S, GSOH, enjoys walking, reading, travel, socialising; seeking tall, considerate, honest gent for hopeful LTR. Box 446079

SEEING THROUGH THE SHYNESS

Attractive female, 53, intelligent, kind, funny, non-smoking, WLTW nice, kind, normal male, 50-60, for theatre, laughs and more. Box 446383

SEEKING SOULMATE

Gorgeous slim attractive young-looking female, 54, active, wicked SOH, 5'10, blue eyes, sociable, loves music, dancing, travelling; seeking warm, sincere man for genuine companionship. Box 446634

ENJOY LIFE

55yr old woman, brown hair/blue eyes, 5'10, I'm divorced with a grown up family. I enjoy reading, travel, cinema, music, eating out, WLTW caring, genuine man. Box 446795

SOPHISTICATED SUE

Sue, 56yr old, 5'10, green eyes, petite, loves cooking, holidays, reading and swimming, with a tall professional male, similar age, for friendship and romance. Box 443309

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Look for the symbol. Just enter the six-digit box number, followed by a space, then PHOT0 and send to 82250

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FANCY A DANCE?

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Women seeking women

LOVE TO LOVE

Easygoing female, 40, blue eyes, blonde hair, medium build, likes winning, dining, socialising, holidays, walks cinema; seeking likewise female for companionship and more. Box 446953

ATTRACTIVE, BUBBLY LADY

5'10, blonde, size 12 enjoys good food/wine, theatre, countryside, holidays; seeking a sincere, genuine female, for friendship first, possibly relationship Box 411443

LOVELY

Young-looking attractive female, 54, n/s, friendly and sociable, love music, dance and history, warm and sparkly, WLTW a genuine female for a close female friendship. Box 445146

COMPANIONSHIP, LAUGHTER, HOPEFULLY MORE

Curvy & cuddly, outgoing, friendly, honest female, 53, 5'10, larger build, fair hair, likes socialising, country walks, theatre, cinema, music, swimming, WLTW similar loving male. Box 443642

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SAILING THE SEVEN SEAS

Young-looking male, 38, 5'10, dark hair, blue eyes, good-looking, no lies, a carpenter, likes the outdoors, seeks lady to sail off and find love with. Box 444371

HOP ON!

Hi, I'm Mark, 61, slim-medium build, lots of interests including motor-cycles, WLTW a kind and honest female to share fun times and laughter with. Box 445124

HONEST, SINCERE, OUTGOING

Male, 39, 5'10, slim, brown hair/brown eyes, really looking for that special lady to make me happy in life, dine with, drink with and more. Box 446033

LONESOME LAD

Blond 39yr old lad, blue eyes, educated, attractive, solvent (just), genuine, old, adventurous and definitely different. Seems beautiful future with someone like you. Box 865814

MARSHAL ME

Chris, 39, 5'10, stocky, green-blue hair, enjoys walks, pubs, wine, swimming, walks on beaches, days out, seeking similar female, for loving times. Box 446167

MAKE IT A LOVELY DAY

Hi, I'm Carl, 40, GSOH, 6'1, light green eyes, brown hair, looking for a fun, bubbly woman to share laugh, days out and much more. Box 436966

ASHFORD MAN

Attractive guy, nice to be with, laid back, I'm 41, 5'10, medium/large build, brown hair, Own business and home, enjoys walks, pubs, wine, restaurants, cinema. Box 437225

SOULMATE SOUGHT

Devoted dad, 43, blond hair, blue eyes, 6'11, likes travelling, spiritualism, means loving, seeking female with GSOH for fun times and hopefully more. Box 446477

I'LL MAKE YOU LAUGH

Very romantic, caring and loyal male,

MOTORS NEWS



Drop in VAT means 500 is now a bargain buy

FIAT'S 500 which has caused a storm in the showroom can now be put on the road for under £8,000. Dealers, and buyers, have the Chancellor to thank after the reduction in VAT.

The 1.2-litre 500 Pop price had crept up to £8,100 during the summer but now you can get one on the road for £7,929.

With dealers offering spectacular finance deals and every one of them looking to win your business, don't forget to ask for a few extras as well.

In November, car sales in the UK fell 36.8 per cent to 100,333 units compared with the same month last year.



New eco-friendly cars 'show' the way forward

MERCEDES has unveiled three new environmentally-friendly 'show' cars.

Called BlueZero – to suggest 'blue skies and zero emissions' – the Mercedes concepts are to include an electric car and a concept powered by a hydrogen fuel cell.

Outside the 'green' bodywork is identical for all three prototypes.

All feature transparent cladding for the rear wheels to reduce resistance.

All the eco cars on show in America use the platform of the next-generation Mercedes B-class compact. The new B-class is to go on sale in Europe in 2012.

Hamilton's got it licked over on the Isle of Man

BRITISH F1 ace Lewis Hamilton is to feature on a series of stamps in the Isle of Man. They'll cost – well, they'll cost about the price of a stamp and will be released on January 15.

The IOM has beaten the Royal Mail which revealed it was considering a set of commemorative stamps featuring the McLaren driver.

It has been reported the Royal Mail's new stamp will be released early next year and they will serve as an accolade for the youngest driver to ever win the World Championship.

It would be a break with tradition for the Royal Mail which has already released its 2009 stamp schedule and has a policy of not featuring living non-royalty on stamps unless they are part of a larger group.



STYLISH: Volkswagen's dramatically styled Scirocco is a decent four-seater, a terrific drive and looks good value compared to its rivals priced at £20,940 for the standard trim

New Scirocco wards off chill of recession

VOLKSWAGEN'S reborn Scirocco coupé simply cannot help reminding us of the mid-70s original.

It's dramatically styled, a decent four-seater, a terrific drive and not a bad buy either.

Our test car was also in white, a favourite during the Mk I Scirocco era and soon dubbed the 'White Stiletto' by colleagues – a jibe at the preferred ladies' disco shoes of the 1970s.

But while 'fashionistas' might dread a return of the ubiquitous white 'Sharon Shoe', surely no-one fears a new Scirocco... even in white?

Our flagship model was spec'd up with more than three grand's worth of extras including leather seats (£1,535), but looks good value in £20,940 standard trim.

I also liked its slick turbocharged Golf GTI engine, though there are now 2.0-litre diesel and entry level turbocharger/supercharger 1.4-litre petrol options.

The 'GTI' version though blends power and a snarling exhaust note when required, while also cruising smoothly and reasonably economically, thanks to a tallish sixth gear.

The chassis delivers a similarly even-hand-

ROAD TEST VW SCIROCCO

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

ed approach; the new Scirocco range features VW's Adaptive Chassis Control system (ACC) as standard so this already versatile car can match all moods and situations.

'Normal' is the all-rounder and 'Comfort' is great for long distances, but 'Sport' soon became my default, because it shows the car's tautness and flat cornering to effect without punishing driver and occupants.

The cabin shows less design input than for the muscular exterior, but it is a neat and well-arranged job using robust quality materials and there is plenty of room in the back.

You could crib about the high rear window line and lowered headroom, but if they are deal breakers then check out the Golf GTI instead.

I take similar issue with whinges about the Scirocco's boot; it is massive for this type of car and entirely in keeping with the dynasty's mix of sportiness and practicality yet you hear moans like "the loading lip's too high", "it's not that big" – what do people expect from a coupé that handles like a dream, seats four properly and costs much less than upmarket rivals?

• Email steve.loader@kosmedia.co.uk



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• Also available in 'S' HDi model

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PRICE
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NEW**

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Final payment	Total amount payable	Total charge for credit	APR
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Fiesta 1.25 Style 3dr
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A fair saving of £61



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Focus 1.8 Sport 5dr
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Parker's Price £6335*
AutoPlanet Price **£6299**
Choice of **365** Medium cars
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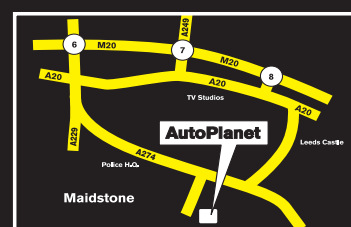
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* Cheaper than Parker's Guide retail prices on selected models only. Parker's franchised retail price for a nearest match specification. † 10.9% APR Typical applies to selected models. Fair deal finance example based on a 07 57 Peugeot 307 1.6 16v S 5dr (A/C) subject to status and age. ** The price when new is calculated at the registration date of the vehicle. Saving based on current new car list price of a 07 57 Peugeot 307 1.6 16v S 5dr (A/C) £14,427 inc. metallic paint and 08 Mazda MX-5 1.8i 2dr £15,605 inc. metallic paint. Terms and conditions apply. This is a limited offer subject to availability, the company reserves the right to withdraw the offer at any time. Offer available on selected cars upon request at commencement of the sales process. Ask your local dealer for further information. AutoPlanet are licensed credit brokers. Written details available upon request. Finance is subject to status, guarantees/indemnities may be required. Cars shown for illustrative purposes only. All prices correct at time of going to press. Monthly payment options available on all cars. Written quotations on request, subject to status, applicants must be over 18. In most cases the customer may not be the 1st registered owner on the registration documents. Address: 1 Lea Valley Road, Chingford, London, E4 7PX.

USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

POPULAR SUPERMINIS

AS more people downsize their car and their fuel and road tax bills, chances are that one or all of the following popular used superminis will be on their shopping list. Year in, year out they are the UK's most consistent best-sellers – a trend expected to become even firmer in the current economic climate. A word of warning though; as second-hand prices harden, make sure you don't pay more than it would cost to keep your old car longer or even make you think about a new car.

FORD FIESTA



FORD'S hugely successful supermini marches on with a new model just out, but don't expect weaker used prices for older versions. Volatile fuel costs, draconian road taxes and fears of a recession have made the Fiesta a top target for its reliability, decent driving experience, engines to suit all pockets and three and five-door body styles. Ford has also regularly produced special and limited editions, but watch that you don't pay more for extra goodies, especially when largely cosmetic.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

VAUXHALL CORSA



VAUXHALL'S Corsa was created to attack the Ford Fiesta head on, yet has never quite achieved the volumes of its rival. Nevertheless, it offers the same virtues, plus a greater range of engines including a punchy and frugal, if a little buzzy, three-cylinder petrol engine now in greater demand due to these straitened times. Several generations of Corsa followed a 'teardrop' body style, but the latest car is bigger and more aggressively sculpted – almost a 'supersize supermini'.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

RENAULT CLIO



DOWNSIZING can be sensible and chic with the Clio and the most recent generations have married durability and driving fun with Gallic charm. Again, the option of three or five doors is a big selling point, but our French contender also has the bonus of excellent diesel versions, though the cost of the actual fuel versus petrol argues against it currently. The Clio design has tended to be highly practical as well as charming, with good space for rear passengers.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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Red, FSH, 1 Owner
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Lineage
Approx. 20 words

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01/Y, 5dr, Hatchback,
Metallic Red, Full Service
History, 1 Owner, Power
Steering, Elec.
Windows, ABS,
30,000 Miles,
01234 567890

3x1
Max. 25 words



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1 Owner, Power Steering, Electric Windows
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00 X ZAFIRA 1-8 COMFORT AUTO PAS GREEN 55000 MILES.....	£3995

RENAULT

07 07 SCENIC GRAND DYNAMIQUE 2-0 AUTO PAS AIRC GREY 10000MILES.....	£9995
07 07 MEGANE 1-6 DYNAMIC AUTO PAS AIRC SILVER 16000 MILES.....	£6995
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06 56 SCENIC DYNAMIC 1-6 AUTO PAS AIRC QUARTZ GOLD 14000 MILES.....	£7995
06 56 MEGANE DYNAMIC 2-0 CONVERTIBLE AUTO PAS 17000 MILES.....	£9995
06 06 RENAULT KANGOO 1-6 EXPRESSION BLUE PAS AUTO 4000 MILES.....	£6995
05 55 SCENIC DYNAMIC 1-6 AUTO PAS AIRC SILVER 7000 MILES.....	£7495
05 05 MERIVA 1-6 DYNAMIC AUTO PAS AIRC 5DR PURPLE 5000 MILES.....	£4995
05 05 LAGUNA 2-0 DYNAMIC AUTO PAS AIRC SILVER 30000 MILES.....	£6995
05 05 MEGANE 1-6 EXPRESSION ESTATE CAR AUTO PAS AIR BLUE 9000MILES.....	£6995
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07 07 C180 KOMP AVANTGARDE SE 4 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 13000 MILES.....	£16995
06 56 C220 CDI AVANTGARDE DIESEL SE EST AUTO PAS BLUE 16000 MILES.....	£8995
06 56 NEW A CLASS 150 CLASSIC SE AUTO PAS 5DR BLUE 2000 MILES.....	£10995
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06 06 C180 COMPRESSOR SE COUPE AUTO PAS AIR/C BLACK 15000 MILES.....	£13995
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06 06 C180 COMPRESSOR CLASSIC AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 26000 MILES.....	£13995
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05 55 NEW ACLASS 150 AVANTGARDE SE AUTO PAS SILVER 20000 MILES.....	£9995
05 55 C180 KOMP ELEGANCE SE AUTO PAS SILVER LEATHER 19000 MILES.....	£14995
05 05 C180 COMPRESSOR AVANTGARDE AUTO PAS BLUE 5000 MILES.....	£13995
05 05 NEW A CLASS 150 CLASSIC SE AUTO PAS 5DR GREEN 19000 MILES.....	£6995
05 05 NEW A CLASS 150 CLASSIC SE AUTO PAS 5DR GOLD 18000 MILES.....	£6995
05 05 C180 COMPRESSOR ELEGANCE SE AUTO PAS PAS BLUE 21000 MILES.....	£13995
05 05 C180 COMPRESSOR CLASSIC AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 20000 MILES.....	£13995
05 05 MERC 270 CDI DIESEL CASH SILVER ALLOYS LEATHER 48000 MILES.....	£16995
03 53 Vaneo 16 FAMILY ESTATE AUTO PAS RED AIR/C 29000 MILES.....	£6495
02 52 MERC 240 CLK AVANTGARDE AUTO PAS ALLOYS SILVER 8000MILES.....	£12995

ALFA ROMEO

146 TI, 5 door, p 1996, a car that will one day become a collectors item. this car is a 2 owner from new with full service history mainly main dealer. 2.0i engine which produces 150bhp, 5 speed manual gearbox. a test drive is welcome, red, 94000 miles, £1495, Courtenay Cars, Charing, 01233 714848 (TRADE)

SPIDER, 3.2 V6, g157ff, alloy wheels, anti-lock brakes, climate control, drivers airbag, electric windows, leather interior, metallic paint, passenger airbag, power steering, remote central locking, side airbags, tinted glass, traction control, trip computer, blue, 9000 miles, £2995, Thames Group Tunbridge Wells, 01892 549766 (TRADE)

AUDI

A2, SE 5dr, gk02 oec, remote central locking, remote alarm, rear wash/wipe, rear headrests, cloth upholstery, electric front windows, electric mirrors, adjustable steering column, height adjustable seat, traction control, air conditioning, climate control, cd player, twin air bags, abs, power steering, alloy wheels, blue, 58000 miles, £4995, Kings Highway Garage Ltd, Plumstead, 020 8855 4000 (TRADE)

A4, 1.9tdi 130 se estate, 2003, blue m with grey cloth, 67000 miles, £8950, Martin James Cars, Kent, 01795426700 (TRADE)

A6, SE 4dr 2.4 Man, g151nzf, remote central locking, cloth upholstery, head restraints, power steering, air bag, abs, colour coded body, metallic paintwork, electric windows, air conditioning, cd player, radio, electric mirrors, 15" alloys, green, 13000 miles, £3499, Marshams, Maidstone, 01622 200 100 (TRADE)

TT, 1.8 20R, 2002, trim: leather engine size: 1800 transmission: manual no. of doors: 2, green, 14000 miles, £1495, Palm Bay, Margate, 01843 298554 (TRADE)

BMW

3 SERIES, 1.6i Saloon 4d 1596cc, 1316hmo, mot---11/04/08 good runner, green, miles, £695.00, DCD Autos, ASHFORD, 01233 642211 (TRADE)

523i, SE auto metallic light green, year 2000, 19" R.S. Alloys, stunning car, good condition for year a bargain at £1750 Tel: 0777 202 4258 (PRIVATE)

7 SERIES, 735i AUTO, 2002, Oxford green metallic with beige nappa exclusive, 79000 miles, £12145, Martin James Cars, Kent, 01795426700 (TRADE)

CHRYSLER

300C, 5.7v8 auto estate, 2007, brilliant crystal met with dark and light slate gr, 10577 miles, £18950, Martin James Cars, Kent, 01795 426700 (TRADE)

NEON, 2.0 LXI, 1995 (n), automatic, 5 door saloon, met green coachwork with contrasting grey velour trim, low mileage, service history, new mot, ew x 4, em, pas, air bags, original hi-fi, only 1 owner from new. low mileage miles, £only £995, Riviera Car Sales, Folkestone, 01303 244244 (TRADE)

PT CRUISER, ly04kpi, remote central locking, cloth upholstery, head restraints, power steering, air bag, colour coded body, metallic paintwork, rear wash/wipe, electric windows, air conditioning, cd player, radio, aluminium silver, 36000 miles, £4499, Marshams, Maidstone, 01622 200 100 (TRADE)

DAIHATSU

CHARADE, Si 5dr, immobiliser, remote central locking, cloth upholstery, head restraints, met paintwork, multiple airbags, abs, power steering, electric front windows/mirrors, 33000 miles, £3695, Automatically Ray Morris (Welling), 0208 303 4030 (TRADE)

COPEN, Activetop 1.3, 08/2008, red leather interior pas remote central locking a/con electric windows rear wind deflector front fog lights sports seats, grey metallic, delivery miles miles, £12845, Chertton Motor House, Folkestone, 01303 275795 (TRADE)

MATERIA, 1.5 MPV 5d 1495cc, alloys electric door mirrors radio/cd player a/con front fog lamps reverse parking sensors remote central locking, steel grey, delivery miles miles, £12,145, Chertton Motor House, Folkestone, 01303 275795 (TRADE)

SIRION, 1.0 SE Hatchback 5d 998cc, 58/2008, abs pas remote c/locking radio/cd electric windows a/con reverse parking sensors, bright red, delivery miles miles, £8995, Chertton Motor House, Folkestone, 01303 275795 (TRADE)

TERIOS, 1.5 SY Station Wagon 5d 1497cc, 08/2008, alloys heated door mirrors remote c/locking pas a/con front fog lights reverse park sensors, metallic blue, 2, 000 miles, £12, 995, Chertton Motor House, Folkestone, 01303 275795 (TRADE)

HONDA

CIVIC, Max 5dr, remote central locking, remote alarm, cloth upholstery, electric front windows, electric mirrors, air con, cd, radio, twin air bags, abs, power steering, silver, 63500 miles, £3995, Kings Highway Garage Ltd, Plumstead, 020 8855 4000 (TRADE)

CR-V, I-VTEC Ex 5dr, lx57jdf, alarm, central locking, immobiliser, locking wheel nuts, privacy glass, remote central locking, cloth upholstery, folding rear seats, rear headrests, cruise control, multi-function steering wheel, parking sensor, power steering, satellite navigation, abs, air bag, brake assist, multiple airbags, cd player, air conditioning, electric front windows, electric mirrors, 4x4, blue, 5000 miles, £1995, Automatically Ray Morris (Welling), 0208 303 4030 (TRADE)

JAZZ, Dsi 5, anti-theft system, central locking, immobiliser, remote alarm, cloth upholstery, colour coded body, multiple airbags, abs, power steering, electric windows, electric front windows, vivid blue, 14000 miles, £6995, Automatically Ray Morris (Welling), 0208 303 4030 (TRADE)

S2000, 2.0i VTEC Roadster, engine immobiliser, remote locking, leather upholstery, remote keyless entry, stereo cd tuner with rds, body colour door mirrors, front speakers, rear disc brakes, tacham category 1 alarm system, soft top roof with glass heated rear screen, electric adjustable and heated door mirrors, digital odometer (trip), body colour bumpers, front electric windows, starter button, pollen filter, roll-over protection, chrome door handles, dual front srs airbags, remote stereo controls, silverstone metallic, 1650 miles, £1995, Barretts Honda, Canterbury, 0845 3709769 (TRADE)

STREAM, 2.0i SE Sport, passenger airbag, alarm, rake/reach adjustable steering column/wheel, driver's seat height adjustment, electric sunroof, seven seats seating capacity, driver airbag, remote central door locking, full size spare wheel, radio/cassette, front/rear electric windows, electric heated mirrors external, eternal blue pearl, 66549 miles, £6495, Barretts Honda, 0845 3709769 (TRADE)

JAGUAR

S TYPE 3.0, 2003 (03), 03 (53) jaguar s-type v6 3.0 se auto, metallic silver coachwork with grey leather trim, only 42000 miles, full service history, usual jaguar refinements to include: power and memory seats, memory steering wheel position, air conditioning/climate control, electric windows, electric & folding mirrors, cd multipayer with hi-fi pack, multiple air bags, electronic park brake, on board computer, cruise control, traction control, tinted glass, alloy wheels etc, etc. only £8995, metallic silver, £8995, Riviera Car Sales, Folkestone, 01303 244244 (TRADE)

SOVEREIGN, 4.0 Saloon 4d 3980cc auto, electric windows, electric mirrors, remote central alarmed locking, air con, radio cassette system, cruise control, cream interior leather, electric seats, memory seats, alloys, front fog lamps, colour coded body, metallic silver/grey, miles, £3995, Westbrook Cars, Canterbury, 01227 710685 (TRADE)

XJ V8, 4.0 sovereign lwb, 2002, seatfoat blue met with catkin leather interior, 71000 miles, £3950, Martin James Cars, 01795426700 (TRADE)

XJ6, cloth, f 1989, a well preserved well serviced part of british history. jaguars are now very collectable, and will become even more so as more are removed from our roads. this car still drives as good as you would expect, you are welcome to come and inspect then test drive her. she has a long mot test and some road tax. this xj6 is the 6 cylinder 3.2 litre version and has all the extras you would expect from a car of this status and year. bronze / gold, 106000 miles, £1995, Courtenay Cars, Charing, Ashford, 01233 714848 (TRADE)

LEXUS

IS, 200 SE, alarm, immobiliser, remote central locking, alcantara leather, half leather, electric seats, heated seats, power steering, stability control, abs, multiple airbags, auto lighting, colour coded body, front fog lamps, electric mirrors/windows, climate control, multi-disc cd player, electric sunroof, child locks, alloys, red, 52000 miles, £5990, AR Cars, Kent, 01342 851122 (TRADE)

MAZDA

323, GT 5dr, 774461, remote central locking, cloth upholstery, head restraints, power steering, air bag, colour coded body, metallic paintwork, rear wash/wipe, electric windows, air conditioning, cd player, stereo, 15" alloys, aluminium silver, 87000 miles, £1999, Marshams, Maidstone, 01622 200 100 (TRADE)

323, GXi D 5dr, ow52hsl, central locking, immobiliser, cloth upholstery, head restraints, power steering, air bag, colour coded body, metallic paintwork, rear wash/wipe, electric windows, air conditioning, cd player, stereo, green, 94000 miles, £2999, Marshams, Maidstone, 01622 200 100 (TRADE)

5, TS2 D 2.0 110PS 5dr MPV, jan 2006 g155hyf, two previous keepers, power steering remote central locking, air conditioning, electric windows, 6 speed gearbox, full service history, radio/cd player, cd autochanger, twin/side/curtain airbags, abs brakes, engine immobiliser, car alarm, electricdoor mirrors, tinted glass, rear wash/wipe, adj. steering column, seat height adjuster, sports seats, seven seats, alloy wheels. carbon grey metallic, 15, 000 miles, £12, 995, Hollis Motors, 01304 206710 (TRADE)

6S, 2005, blue metallic, 12999 miles, £6495, WJ King Vauxhall, Bromley, 020 8464 3456 (TRADE)

MAZDA2, Capella 5dr, 6481079, remote central locking, remote alarm, rear wash/wipe, rear headrests, electric mirrors, electric windows, cloth upholstery, height adjustable seat, adjustable steering column, power steering, air conditioning, cd player, radio, twin air bags, abs, alloy wheels, grey, 14900 miles, £4995, Kings Highway Garage Ltd, Plumstead, 020 8855 4000 (TRADE)

MERCEDES-BENZ

A-CLASS, 1.5 A150 Classic Hatchback 3d 1488cc, 57, climate, alarm & immobiliser, cd, 1 owner, please view our website to see our full stock, more a150 in stock, atoll blue with black cloth, under 12, 500 miles, £10495, Vikings Canterbury, Canterbury, 01227 711112 (TRADE)

B-CLASS, 2.0TD B200 CDI SE Hatchback 3d 1992cc Autronic, 06, alloys, parktronic, rain sensor, climate, cruise cd, please view our website to see our full stock, more b200cdi in stock, cosmos black with grey cloth, under 33, 000 miles, £15995, Vikings Canterbury, Canterbury, 01227 711112 (TRADE)

MINI

COOPER, 2005, abs body coloured bumpers drivers airbag electricdoor mirrors folding rear seats front electric windows front head restraints height adjustable drivers seat isofix child seat anchor points pas passenger airbag radio/cd multichanger rear wiper remote central locking service indicator side airbags steering wheel rake adjustment, metallic silver, 35536 miles, £9995, WJ King Vauxhall, Bromley, 020 8464 3456 (TRADE)

ONE, 3dr, lx52 ucu, front fog lamps, remote central locking, remote alarm, height adjustable seat, power steering, adjustable steering column, electric front windows, electric mirrors, air conditioning, cd player, radio, twin air bags, abs, cloth upholstery, alloy wheels, salt pack, yellow, 44000 miles, £6995, Kings Highway Garage Ltd, Plumstead, 020 8855 4000 (TRADE)

RENAULT

CLIO, Privilege, feb 06, 5 doors, automatic, hatchback, petrol, 13, 075 miles, metallic grey, 2 owners. 3x3 point rear seat belts, abs, air conditioning, alloy wheels, audio remote control, body coloured bumpers, cloth seat trim, climate control, cruise control, drivers airbag, electricdoor mirrors, folding rear seats, front electric windows, front head restraints, full size spare wheel, heated door mirrors, height adjustable drivers seat, immobiliser, isofix child seat anchor points, lumbar support, pas, passenger airbag, radio/cd, rear electric windows, rear headrests, rear wiper, remote central locking, service indicator, side airbags, steering wheel rake adjustment, computer full service renaul history/let service 27/1008, 2 months tax, insurance group:6, grey, £7250, KENT, 01843 585186 (PRIVATE)

SAAB, 9-3, Linear T1D 1.9, 2 previous keepers, power steering, remote central locking, air con, electric windows, 6 speed gearbox, full service history, radio/cd, twin & side airbags, abs brakes, immobiliser, car alarm, tinted glass, seat height adjuster, alloys, silver metallic, 32,000 miles, £9,495, Hollis Motors, Dover, 01304 206710 (TRADE)

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Career Opportunities



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to nearly 800 staff and we have some great career opportunities which may be right for you.

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Section Manager Dental Nursing, Social Care and Counselling	06/110
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Coordinator Mathematics	08/61
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Lecturer Media in Interactive Media	04/64
18.5 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum	
Pre 16 Tutor	07/12
37 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum Fixed term post ending 31 August 2010	
Lecturer Computing and IT	L24
37 hrs per week salary range £18,387 – £26,363 per annum. Fixed term post ending 31 December 2012	
Lecturer Public Services	06/92 & 08/145
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Supply Lecturers to teach Learning Support and Teaching Assistants	S/HE/LS
Various hours available, salary range £18,387 – £26,363 pro rata per annum	

Skills for Life Initial Assessor 08/154
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Staff benefits include:

- Pension & Life Assurance Scheme
- Sports Hall & Gym
- Proximity to main bus & train stations
- Generous Holiday Allowance
- Close to City Centre
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The closing date for the above posts is Monday 12 January 2009 at 12 noon

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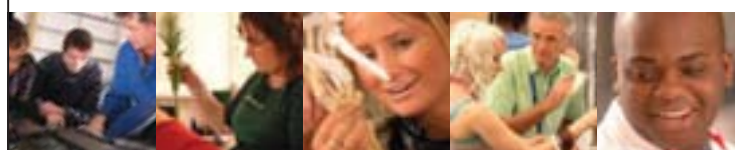
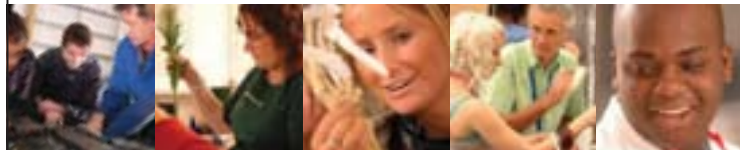
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Closing date: Friday, 16 January 2009

Mid-Kent College is working in partnership with RBL Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBL, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBL on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbl.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and anyone applying for work with the College is expected to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to an Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the Personnel department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

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Closing date: 26/12/08

Lifelong Learning Advisor

Salary: £24,103 to £32,653 pa
Band: 6
Hours: 37.5
Location: Ashford
Ref: 767-ECC695
Closing date: 02/01/09

Team Secretary

Salary: £14,834 - £17,732 pa
Band: 3
Hours: 20
Location: Dover
Ref: 767-ECC696
Closing date: 07/01/09

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Band: 8a
Hours: 37.5
Location: Folkestone
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Closing date: 29/12/08

Stroke Specialist Nurse X 2

Salary: £29,091 to £38,352 pa
Band: 7
Hours: 37.5
Location: Whitstable
Ref: 767-EIC699
Closing date: 29/12/08

Community Children's Nurse

Salary: £24,103 to £32,653 pa
Band: 6
Hours: 37.5
Location: Children's Assessment Centre, Kent & Canterbury Hospital
Ref: 767-ECC655
Closing date: 31/12/08

Community Children's Nurse - Clinical Deputy

Salary: £37,106 to £44,527 pa
Band: 8a
Hours: 37.5
Location: Children's Assessment Centre, Kent & Canterbury Hospital
Ref: 767-ECC656
Closing date: 31/12/08

Staff Nurse

Salary: £20,225 - £26,123 pa
Band: 5
Hours: 37.5
Location: Whitstable & Tankerton Hospital
Ref: 767-EIC710
Closing date: 04/01/09

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Salary: £24,103 - £32,653 pa
Band: 6
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Health Promotion Practitioner

Salary: £20,225 to £26,123 pa
Band: 5
Hours: 37.5
Location: Whitfield Court, Dover
Ref: 767-ECC690
Closing date: 31/12/08

Health Promotion Practitioner

Salary: £20,225 to £26,123 pa
Band: 5
Hours: 37.5
Location: Whitfield Court, Dover
Ref: 767-ECC691
Closing date: 31/12/08

Occupational Therapist

Salary: £20,225 to £26,123 pa
Band: 5
Hours: 37.5
Location: Cairn Ryan, Dover
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ADDITIONAL CLINICAL SERVICES

Health Visitor

Salary: £24,103 to £32,653 pa
Band: 6
Hours: 37.5
Location: Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, Herne Bay
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Closing date: 02/01/09

Health Visitor

Salary: £24,103 to £32,653 pa
Band: 6
Hours: 37.5
Location: Swale, Kent
Ref: 767-ECC713
Closing date: 02/01/09

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Salary: £24,103 to £32,653 pa
Band: 6
Hours: 37.5
Location: Whitstable Health Centre
Ref: 767-ECC722
Closing date: 02/01/09

Health Visitor

Salary: £24,103 to £32,653 pa
Band: 6
Hours: 30
Location: Ramsgate, Kent
Ref: 767-ECC720
Closing date: 02/01/09

Healthcare Assistant

Salary: £14,834 - £17,732 pa
Band: 3
Hours: 18
Location: Various Sites across East Kent
Ref: 767-EIC707
Closing date: 02/01/09

Healthcare Assistant

Salary: £12,922 to £15,950 pa
Band: 2
Hours: 37.5
Location: Whitstable & Tankerton Hospital
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Closing date: 04/01/09

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Online learning to cut out packaging waste

WITH cost-savings an ongoing priority for businesses during the tough economic climate, sustainable business experts Envirowise are advising companies in the South East to think 'out of the box' when it comes to identifying ways they can cut out waste in 2009.

With an estimated 80 per cent of the cost of a product and its packaging set at the design stage, the adoption of leaner, more sustainable, packaging design, without any loss in performance, can have a positive knock-on effect on costs and profitability.

To help companies understand where improvements can be made, and to help them influence supply chains, Envirowise is running a free webinar on eco-design for products and packaging on Wednesday, February 25.

To sign up or find out more, see www.envirowise.gov.uk/webinar.

Funding to help with management training

GOOD Christmas news for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) who have between five and 249 employees: they now have the opportunity to claim up to £2,000 of funding to spend on leadership training for their senior management team.

With up to £1,000 available through the Government's Train To Gain scheme, plus another £1,000 of matched funding by training company Enterprise Leaders Worldwide, executives of qualifying SMEs can be taught entrepreneurial leadership by past and present stars of TV's Dragons' Den, Simon Woodroffe and Duncan Bannatyne. Details are available at www.train2ogain1k.co.uk.

Demand is on the up

APPROACHING the first anniversary of the launch of its Thames Gateway office at Chatham Historic Dockyard, regional law firm Furley Page is bucking the business trend and celebrating a period of growth.

The team is led by commercial law partner Susan Jennings, who said the team had found an increasing demand for private client services – from people moving home to needing advice on wills, tax-planning and family law issues.



SCALED DOWN: Recession fears were put aside by many businesses, with three in five firms still holding office parties, even if they were slightly smaller than previous years

We're not too gloomy to hold office parties

■ BY TONY PATEY

GLOOM in the economy did not stop businesses staging celebrations in the run-up to Christmas this year – but some of the trimmings were carved out of the traditional office get-togethers.

A survey published by the Chartered Management Institute revealed three out of every five firms held an office party – only slightly down on the two out of three in 2007.

Bosses say the knees-ups were designed to boost staff morale despite the miserable predictions for the year ahead.

The report suggests that some employers, however, were adopting a more socially aware approach – preferring to spend their money on good causes.

But they were watching the pennies. Many employers believed extravagant parties were unnecessary. Fifty per cent, for example, sug-

gested hosting expensive parties could have a negative impact on their reputation.

For many the festivities were funded out of the staff's own pocket. A quarter of employers in the region made no financial contribution to office parties this year, although a quarter agreed to pay up to £40 per person.

Key findings included:

- Budget bashes: only a minority in Kent – 12 per cent – included employees' partners in this year's celebrations and just two per cent invited clients. Half were concerned expensive parties might send out the wrong message in the current climate.
- Social conscience: 37 per cent in the region bought only Christmas cards that support charities and 22 per cent went for eCards – demonstrating a concern for the environment. And half argued Christmas was an appropri-

ate time to engage in corporate social responsibility – going out into the community to help.

• 'Tis the season of thanks: 37 per cent of line managers bought gifts for their team members and 16 per cent gave time off at Christmas without taking out of holiday leave.

Jo Causon, director of marketing and corporate affairs at the institute, said: "It should come as no surprise that employers controlled Christmas budgets with tighter purse-strings this year."

"However, it is encouraging to see responsible budget management is going hand-in-hand with an effort to thank staff for their efforts during the year and a determination to recognise hard work."

Away from work, the survey also asked respondents to name the 'must-hear' festive music. Among the favourites this year were perennial classic Silent Night, Fairy Tale Of New York by The Pogues and Kirsty MacColl, and Bing Crosby's White Christmas.

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Villa cup clash to pack out Priestfield

Picture: GORR KUPCO



FULL HOUSE: Tickets for Gillingham's FA Cup third-round clash against Aston Villa have sold out

THE last few tickets for Gillingham's FA Cup tie with Aston Villa were sold this week with Priestfield set for its first sell-out in more than five years.

Despite ticket prices being increased by 15 per cent on a normal home game, the prospect of watching England stars Gareth Barry, Ashley Young and Gabriel Agbonlahor has seen Gills fans turn out in force.

Supporters with season tickets or ticket stubs from games against Stockport and Chesterfield, queued for more than an hour at times last week to get their hands on the prized tickets for the third-round tie on January 4.

If Villa sell out their 1,500 allocation it will be the first time Priestfield

FOOTBALL

will be completely sold out since September 2003, when 11,400 crammed in to watch Gills beat West Ham 2-0 in Division One.

Regardless of the result, Gills are set to bank at least £300,000 from the game, which will be shown live on television. The figure could rise substantially if they manage to force a replay at Villa Park, where they would take home 45 per cent of the gate.

The club have already seen a surge in interest, with ticket sales for last Saturday's game against Brentford

and the visit of Wycombe Wanderers on Sunday higher than expected.

Gills boss Mark Stimson is aware his players could be distracted ahead of games against Dagenham & Redbridge on Boxing Day and Wycombe on Sunday, but plans to use Villa as an incentive.

He said: "We have got to stay focused because everyone's human and we know what's coming. We can't get away from that but I'll be stressing to the players that won't happen if you don't perform correctly because no one's shirt is guaranteed."

Log on to www.kentnews.co.uk for live match updates from Gills' next three games and all the build-up to the big FA Cup clash.

Kent to take on Aussies in packed fixture list

KENT will take on the visiting Australians in a two-day game at Canterbury ahead of the fifth and final Test of the 2009 Ashes series.

Next season's fixtures were announced last week, with Rob Key's side beginning the LV County Championship against Northamptonshire at Canterbury on April 21.

Beckenham will host two Twenty20 games against Middlesex Crusaders and Sussex Sharks. Essex are the opponents for the Tunbridge Wells Festival in June, while Middlesex visit for Canterbury week from August 5.

Key's side end the County Championship campaign at St Lawrence against Leicestershire. Kent will take on Ricky Ponting's Australians in a two-day game on August 15.

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See our London Golf Club course guide with expert Alasdair Robertson

Bank Holiday bonanza at Lydden race track

LYDDEN Hill will host the European Rallycross Championship over the Bank holiday weekend of April 12-13.

It will be the first time the circuit has hosted the event since 1996 and manager Amy Doran is expecting a record crowd of 30,000 to flock to the Dover circuit.

In order to meet the FIA regulations for the event, Lydden has had to extend the track at a cost in the region of £200,000.

The newly-built circuit will be tested ahead of the European Championships on January 3 by hosting a round of the Winter Rallycross Series.

PLEASE SEND YOUR SPORTS STORIES TO SPORTS EDITOR GLENN PEARSON AT glenn.pearson@kosmedia.co.uk



RETURN: Crowds flocked to the London Club to watch the likes of Colin Montgomerie (on the tee) and Padraig Harrington (inset) battle it out for the European Open in May

Coup for club as it bags European Open return

GOLF

■ BY DAVID PRITCHARD

THE London Golf Club has set its sights on attracting more than 100,000 spectators to the European Open next year after the tournament was again awarded to the Kent course.

The four-day Open in July was the first time the club, near Ash, had hosted an event on the European Tour. Despite being hit by bad weather on the final day, about 61,000 people attended the tournament, which featured a top class field including Sergio Garcia, Padraig Harrington and Ian Poulter.

Heath Harvey, general manager at the London Club, was delighted with the maiden tournament but is hoping for more in 2009.

"On the whole, most things exceeded our expectations," he said. "We are just hellbent on growing the attendance to in excess of 100,000.

There's no point in putting the tournament on unless you can make it as big as possible. Our ambition is to make this one of the biggest events in Kent next year."

The European Tour began talks about bringing the tournament back to the club this summer, but the announcement was delayed by problems finding a sponsor. A sponsor is due to be announced soon, which allowed the Tour to make its decision to return to Kent next May.

Despite the uncertainty, the club was confident of retaining the tournament and within weeks of this year's event had begun a £100,000 groundworks programme. Several new tees have been installed to make the

course tougher, while minor improvements will be made throughout the spring.

Ashford's Benn Barham, Kent's only European Tour professional, knows the club well and believes it compares well to the other courses featured in the calendar.

He said: "The venue is fantastic, both the club and the course are built for a major tournament, it's always a joy to go there."

The club also hopes to stage a repeat of this year's hugely successful 'Free Ticket Thursday' promotion. About 14,000 people signed up for up to two tickets each with the scheme, which gave 24,000 golf fans the chance to see world class players for free on the first day of the tournament.

Harvey said: "It's down to the European Tour but I would hope it comes back because it's a good initiative. It was terrific to see so many people of all ages enjoying the golf for free on the first day."

Picture: ADY KERRY

Stones battle back to put Rams in their pen

FOOTBALL

BY TOM HOWARD

Maidstone United 3

Blackman 43, 84 Bradbrook 75

Ramsgate 2

Royston 12 Brown 38



A LATE Lloyd Blackman header completed a thrilling comeback from Maidstone United, who go into the festive period firmly entrenched in the Ryman Premier play-offs.

Ramsgate started the game full of confidence and threatened early on and took the lead through former United defender Ryan Royston.

The defender latched onto a rebound from a Ben Brown shot and chipped the ball into the net.

Ramsgate doubled their advantage through Brown who sprinted through the Maidstone defence and slotted the ball past Stones goalkeeper Andy Walker.

With five minutes remaining before the interval, Maidstone sprang into life and pulled a goal back.

A subtle chip from Roland Edge split the Rams defence and Lloyd Blackman fired the ball on the turn into the bottom corner.

It was as if the two sides had swapped during the interval as Maidstone came out with something to prove and penned Ramsgate in their own half.

On 75 minutes Maidstone struck, James Pinnock broke free down the right wing and Elliot Bradbrook turned in his cross to draw the sides level.

With six minutes remaining, Blackman completed the comeback by heading in an Ashley Ulph free-kick.

Joint manager Alan Walker praised his



Picture BOB HAYTON

THRILLER: Lloyd Blackman clinched the winner and completed an impressive comeback for Maidstone

side's efforts in coming back from the dead.

He said: "To go two goals down and come back to win 3-2 is a fantastic result. To be fair, we battered them second half and had all the play. We got what we deserved."

"Lloyd [Blackman] was brilliant - he picked up a knock but kept fighting and got the winner. All the credit goes to the lads as they have had a knock by what has happened at the football club. They have all rallied around the club and ground out two fantastic results."

The Stones will travel to league leaders Dover Athletic on Saturday, but Walker believes it will be a tall order to come away from Crabble with a result.

He added: "It's a big tough game. The pressure

Maidstone starting XI



Subs used: Elmes (Farrell 45), Austin (Brooks 75)

is on Dover and not us. We have got to give it our best shot. They are not unbeatable, but it is up to us to make sure we keep putting the shifts in and give a good account of ourselves."

Midfielder Ian Selley has left the club to join Ryman Division One South side Croydon Athletic.

Maidstone falter at the final hurdle

RUGBY

Maidstone 16 Tunbridge Wells 18

A DISASTROUS final ten minutes saw Maidstone give up an eight-point lead which would have secured their first league win of the season.

Maidstone dominated the first half and should have had the game wrapped up after creating numerous scoring opportunities.

Two Piers Francis penalties gave an unchanged Maidstone side an early lead, but Wells cut the deficit to three shortly after with a successful penalty.

Maidstone extended their lead with the first try of the afternoon, when Martin Arnold released Mark Ryan on the wing to dive under the posts. Francis added the extras.

The second half saw Tunbridge come out of the blocks quickly and they threatened the Maidstone defence.

However, the game changed on 55 minutes as John O'Brien was sent to the sin bin. This allowed Wells to take the advantage and score a try.



DEFEAT: Maidstone still search for their first league win after a nightmare final ten minutes

In the final ten minutes Maidstone gave away an eight-point lead by conceding a penalty followed by a converted try deep into injury time.

In London South East 3, Aylesford Bulls maintained their charge towards the top of the division with a 22-19 win against Sevenoaks. Aylesford are just two points adrift of league leaders Old Elthamians.

Masters loses Tour card after injury wrecks hopes

GOLF

DANI Masters says she felt "sick with disappointment" after making the heartbreaking decision to retire from the Dubai Masters and lose her Tour card for next season.

The 25-year-old had a wretched 2008 season, which was ruined by a succession of injuries. She recovered just in time to play in the last tournament of the season, but a recurrence of a back injury forced her to pull out in the second round.

Too much golf in the build-up to the tournament led to the problems with her back resurfacing during the second round.

"There were quite a few tears when I had to retire," she said. "It was a massive disappointment because I worked so incredibly hard with everything I felt I needed to do. I was absolutely gutted. I felt sick with disappointment and like I had let myself down."

Retiring from the event meant Masters finished 109th on the Order of Merit with only the top 80 players securing their card for next season.

Her chances of playing on the Ladies European Tour in 2009



Picture TRISTAN JONES

FUTURE DOUBTS: Dani Masters will have to go to qualifying school to earn her tour status

now rests solely on her performance at Qualifying School next month.

The top 30 finishers from the event at La Manga in Southern Spain will return to the European Tour.

She added: "I would be distraught if I failed, but you move on. I'm really passionate about golf but it's never been the be all and end all. If something happened which meant I couldn't carry on I would have to do something else. I wouldn't just give up."



Picture STEVE TIBBELL

INTEREST: Maidstone chairman Paul Bowden-Brown believes another party is interested in buying the club

Rift with Lashings chief over club price denied by chairman

FOOTBALL

MAIDSTONE United chairman Paul Bowden-Brown has dismissed rumours he priced Lashings owner David Folb out of a move for the club.

Lashings Cricket Club owner Folb confirmed his interest in buying the Stones immediately after it was put up for sale by Bowden-Brown earlier this month.

However, despite a number of meetings with the Stones chairman, life-long Maidstone fan Folb was unable to agree a deal.

Bowden-Brown said: "The situation is David made a decision that he cannot go forward with the buy out. I would like to make this point that some supporters believe the reason for this was the price of the club was too great, but that was not the reason."

Folb, who tried to buy Maidstone in 2004, hopes another solution for the club's future can be found.

He said: "It is with regret that I am unable to pursue my interest in purchasing Maidstone United. Unfortunately I was unable to agree on a deal and have reluctantly had to accept I can't take over the club at this moment in time."

"I have supported Maidstone United for three decades and I would also like to place on record my thanks to Paul Bowden-Brown, who acted as a gentleman throughout the negotiations."

"The economic climate means this is a very difficult time to be running a football club and I have every sympathy for Paul."

"It's a very complicated process but I very much hope that another solution can be found to help the club through these difficult times."

Bowden-Brown has revealed that there is interest from another party, but has refused to disclose their identity.

The Stones chairman has issued a rallying cry for all supporters to attend an open meeting at The Orchard Spot Pub on January 7.

He added: "I want everybody at the meeting to ask the questions they want. They may not like the answers but at least that will be done because the players and the management are doing their job and I need the supporters to help this club."

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